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Churches, Chapels and Communities:
Comparative Studies in County Durham 1870-1914.

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University of Durham
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1997.

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- 2 JUL 1998

Churches, Chapels and Communities: Comparative Studies in County Durham 1870-1914.

John Richard Hind.

This study examines the role of the churches of various Christian denominations during the period 1870-1914. It investigates three areas of County Durham. The Borough of South Shields is the main focus of the study and provides evidence of the churches' work in a large urban centre. Two comparative studies are also included: the coal mining villages of the Deerness Valley close to Durham City provide evidence from a newly industrialised area whilst the villages of Upper Teesdale illustrate trends in a more rural area in which the lead mining industry was in significant decline during this period. The approach of the study is comparative throughout.

The study concentrates on several aspects of the churches' work. The provision of manpower and buildings are examined as the churches' response to the needs created by social change; there is also an investigation of the effectiveness of evangelical mission as a means of recruiting support for the churches. The study examines the churches' work with and attitude towards children - both inside and outside Sunday school - and with adults in various non liturgical activities. There are also sections on the churches' role in education and social welfare work.

The study reflects recent developments in the fields of social and religious history in its examination of the churches' fears of 'decline' during this period and the extent to which such fears were justified. The comparative approach enables urban developments to be compared and contrasted with rural activities and allows the experience of different denominations to be included in the study.

Acknowledgements.

I should like to thank the staff of Durham County Record Office, South Shields Public Library, Tyne and Wear County Record Office and the Durham University Department of Archives and Special Collections for their help in the production of this work. My thanks are also due to several members of the local Roman Catholic community for allowing me access to their records, notably Robin Gard of the Newcastle Diocesan Archive, Fr. Morrissey of South Shields and the library staff at Ushaw Moor College. Dr. May Heimann of Newnham College Cambridge was kind enough to read some of my writing about the Roman Catholic churches and communities and to pass useful and encouraging comments on it. To her and to Norman Emery - who looked over some of my writing about the Deerness Valley communities - I am grateful. Clifford Ward allowed me to read a copy of his work on St. Hilda's parish, South Shields, which contained useful information.

My particular thanks are due to the late Tom Percival for nurturing my interest in the local history of the North East and for providing me with contacts in the Durham University Department of History. My supervisor, Dr. Duncan Bythell, has been a generous and inspiring teacher and critic throughout and I am greatly indebted to him for his ideas and friendship. Finally I should like to thank my wife, Ginny, for her understanding and support and my father and mother for their unfailing enthusiasm and encouragement.

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Introduction: The Christian Churches and Society 1870 - 1914.

The 'decline' of religion.

If counting of heads at worship was a fair test, it could not be said in 1900 that Christianity, in either its Anglican or Nonconformist version, was winning the battle.¹

Inglis's 1963 assessment of the place of religion at the turn of the century very much reflected the pessimism of church leaders from across the religious spectrum of the later Victorian and Edwardian period. The Rev. A. F. Winnington Ingram (Bishop of London 1901 - 39) wrote in 1896, whilst still vicar of Bethnal Green:

It is not that the Church of God has lost the great towns; it has never had them

and J. H. Shakespeare cited an absolute decline in numbers throughout the nonconformist churches to support observations on decline made during his secretarial address to the Baptist Conference of 1908.²

The fear that the churches were somehow 'in decline' was rooted in several factors. In those denominations where precise measurement was possible, membership was not keeping pace with population growth and numbers attending services seemed to be falling in most churches. Not all denominations

¹ Inglis K.S. Churches and the Working Classes in Victorian England (London, 1963) p.118.

² Winnington Ingram Rev. A.F. 'Work in Great Cities' (1896) p.22 quoted in Inglis Churches and the Working Classes p.3 ; Shakespeare J. H. 'The Arrested Progress of the Church' (1908) quoted in Cox J. The English Churches in a Secular Society (New York, 1982) p.224.

were adversely affected. The Salvation Army, the Quakers and the Plymouth Brethren, for example, all enjoyed growing membership rolls in the years before the First World War. Regional variations were also important. Yet, according to McLeod's recent summary, the national picture was of declining membership and attendance in both the Anglican and Nonconformist churches, whilst the statistics for the Roman Catholic church are too tentative to permit definitive conclusions to be reached.³

There was also particular concern about the churches' mission to the new urban centres which were seen by many as centres of deprivation, immorality, intemperance and irreligion. The Girls' Friendly Society was formed to provide a means of overcoming 'the awful realities of the town life of our English girls'. If Mrs. Liddell's views represented Anglicanism and 'the major features of late Victorian Conservatism', General Booth's Salvation Army, from a different religious perspective, saw the new towns as the home of the 'Submerged Tenth' and recognised urban poverty as an obstacle to its evangelical crusades.⁴ Of course, towns were not monoliths. Residential differentiation, especially the drift to the suburbs which was characteristic of this period, meant that different areas within individual towns could display markedly different attitudes towards religion.⁵ Yet this itself served to reinforce a further concern, apparent amongst

³ McLeod H. *Religion and Society in England 1850-1914* (London, 1996) pp.170-174.

⁴ Mrs. Liddell in Special Report of G.F.S. Branch Secretaries' Meeting 1879 quoted in Harrison B. *For Church, Queen and Family: The Girls' Friendly Society in Past and Present* no. 61 (1973) pp.118-9; Inglis *Churches and the Working Classes* pp.170 ff.

⁵ Pooley C.G. *Choice and constraint in the nineteenth century city: A basis for residential differentiation* in Johnson J.H. and Pooley C.G. *The Structure of Nineteenth Century Cities* pp.199-233 (Beckenham, 1982).

many contemporaries, that the churches were incapable of reaching those members of the lower social classes left in the urban centres.

Working class irreligion was a clear theme in Inglis's work and his opinions are supported by a host of contemporary commentators. Though there was a recognition, even amongst these authors, that the 'working classes' comprised many different groups, not all of which were 'lost' to the churches, there was still a feeling that 'multitudes' were 'constantly sinking into more complete indifference to their religious privileges'.⁶ More recent commentators have highlighted the costs of religious activity for the working classes; Yeo argued that these extended beyond the obvious financial expenses into demands on already limited leisure time. Writing in 1974, McLeod followed a similar theme:

Forced to choose between the food, clothing and fuel essential to 'physical efficiency'; the pleasures and companionship of the pub; or subscriptions to a school, trade union or a church, most people performed the first or the second...If the native poor preferred their pigeon loft, their fishing rod and their pint pot, this was because organisations, religious, political, cultural, ranked low on their list of priorities.⁷

There were further concerns that men were especially underrepresented amongst the church going population; concerns which were not without foundation since, according to McLeod, 'throughout the nineteenth century women attended church services in greater numbers than men'.⁸ A particular concern was the loss

⁶ Report of the Joint Committee on Organisations to Reach Classes now Outside Religious Ministrations (1889) p. 7, quoted in Inglis Churches and the Working Classes p.26.

⁷ Yeo S. Religion and Voluntary Organisations in Crisis (London, 1976) pp. 118-20; McLeod H. Class and Religion in the Late Victorian City (London, 1974) p.46.

⁸ McLeod Religion and Society p.157.

of young men when they drifted out of the orbit of the churches during adolescence.

Underlying this apparent decline in religious practice was a changing intellectual climate. The religious certainties of the Evangelical Revival were increasingly questioned as the nineteenth century progressed. Higher Criticism undermined literal interpretations of the bible whilst science challenged the validity of many New Testament events. Belief in Hell, in particular, was being questioned, privately from 1850 onwards and publicly after 1870 when it was felt:

that hell was an immoral means of cajoling people into a self interested virtue⁹

To some extent the churches were able to accommodate the growing climate of doubt which characterised this period - McLeod shows that many denominations became more 'liberal' in their theology - but this was a process with its own dangers, especially for the liberal Nonconformists who, Cox argues, found themselves 'floating aimlessly on top of society', cut off from their heritage and lacking either the certainty of the evangelical era or the historical continuity of Anglicanism.¹⁰

Alongside the questioning of basic religious faith, the churches also faced the problem of growing secular alternatives to their work. The state's intervention into education was such that Cox could conclude that:

⁹ McLeod Class and Religion p.227.

¹⁰ McLeod Religion and Society pp.179-194; Cox The English Churches p.245.

The schoolteacher had replaced the clergyman, and the Education Committee had replaced the church.¹¹

The churches were also being 'marginalised' in social work and scientific endeavour as secular professions developed in these fields. In politics the 'nonconformist conscience' which had exerted such influence over nineteenth century Liberalism had, according to its historian, ceased to exist by 1910.¹² In so far as it was replaced by socialist ideas based on an essentially secular view of the world, the churches seemed further threatened. In leisure activities too secular providers were not only competitors to the churches, but had also helped to undermine Sabbatarian practices which had seemed a central plank of nineteenth century religious practice.

For some historians, these indicators point towards a sociological model of 'decline' for the churches of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. At its most basic, secularisation theory sees the decline of religion as an irreversible transformation moving religion from the centre to the periphery of life.¹³ Currie and his collaborators' similarly deterministic cycles of progressive, marginal and recessive phases in the institutional lives of churches are moderated by those 'external influences' - especially 'endogenous factors' - which dictate the timing of such changes. Nevertheless, their conclusions imply that contemporary fears of decline were well founded in a period when economic factors, the effect of war

¹¹ Cox The English Churches p.190.

¹² Bebbington D.W. The Nonconformist Conscience: Chapel and Politics 1870-1914 (London, 1982) p.160.

¹³ Green S.J.D. Religion in the Age of Decline: Organisation and Experience in Industrial Yorkshire 1870-1920 (Cambridge, 1996) summarises both the theory of secularisation and the main criticisms of it in his introduction pp.5-16.

and the general process of 'secularisation' all damaged the churches by drawing into question the 'utility' of church membership and producing a 'diminished resort to supernatural means' amongst the population of Britain.¹⁴ Other historians have been informed by such models, but have tended to the specific, rather than the general, in their examination of the function of the churches during this period. Chadwick's investigations were rooted in Bradford, but her conclusions echo the pessimism of Inglis and of Currie et al. The Bradford churches were 'irrelevant for a substantial proportion of the population' and their innovative attempts to win working class support 'met with the smallest success'.¹⁵

Alternative interpretations of the churches' place in society.

Yet despite the weight of contemporary evidence to the contrary, some historians have questioned the extent of the churches' 'decline' in the years before the First World War. Investigations have focused on several points, not least the issue of working class attitudes towards religion. Green, for example, regards the churches as 'more socially comprehensive' than any secular organisations. Their success can be measured in terms of:

the degree to which they succeeded in persuading individuals of all districts and from all classes, that their [the churches'] appeal

¹⁴ Currie R., Gilbert A.D. and Horsley L. Churches and Churchgoers (Oxford, 1977) passim. and p.100.

¹⁵ Chadwick R.E. Churches and People in Bradford and District 1880 - 1914 (D. Phil. diss., University of Oxford, 1986) pp.341-342.

really did transcend the increasing divisiveness of developing social differentiation.¹⁶

In part, this appeal relied on the churches' 'primary function' of spreading the religious message of the Gospel with its emphasis on the common humanity of all men.¹⁷ Yet the churches also promulgated models of 'respectable' behaviour which, according to McLeod, 'had great resonance for many working class church goers' and which help to explain why churches were attended by a wide spectrum from within the 'respectable working classes'.¹⁸ Cox classifies Free Methodists, Primitive Methodists and Baptists as 'plebeian nonconformists', a group to which the Bible Christians might plausibly be added. Obelkevich's observations on the structure of Primitive Methodism in South Lindsey seem to support this categorisation and to give it comparative validity. Even Chadwick, despite her belief that the working classes were not well represented in 'church, not only refers to churches with 'predominantly working class constituencies' in Bradford - the Salvation Army and New Connexion and United Methodists are named along with the Primitives - but also notes that such churches were 'resistant to decline', perhaps partly because, as Cox suggests, they served as 'psychological mutual aid societies for little people'.¹⁹ Of course, none of this is to deny that the working classes were less likely to attend religious services than were the middle and upper classes. Amongst the very poor in Keighley's slums only the 'ghetto Irish' had any loyalty to a church 'for the rest, the very idea of

¹⁶ Green Religion in the Age of Decline p.24; p.85.

¹⁷ Currie et al. Churches and Churchgoers pp.62-3.

¹⁸ McLeod Religion and Society p.25. For further discussion of the concept Of respectability, see below pp. 226-7.

¹⁹ Cox The English Churches p.137; Obelkevich J.T. Religion and Rural Society: South Lindsey 1825-1875 (Oxford, 1976) pp.237-242; Chadwick Churches in Bradford p.123.

religious participation and commitment was all but inconceivable'.²⁰ Nor is it to deny that the middle classes were largely responsible for the leadership and financing of many churches. In Bristol they made up an 'elite' which united both Nonconformists and Anglicans and Liberals and Tories and had:

a common interest in religious sub-culture [which was] more important than their denominational difference.²¹

Indeed, it was this kind of patronage which, for Cox, gave the churches a special significance in society:

Victorian and Edwardian religion was important precisely because the churches were better able to attract those with wealth and power than those without, those who could make decisions affecting the lives of others rather than those who could not, those in the center [sic] of society rather than those on the margins.²²

Yet the idea that the working classes were lost to the churches *en masse* is no longer entirely tenable in the light of evidence of those churches which attracted working class congregations. McLeod takes the argument a stage further by arguing that the very basis of earlier assumptions about working class irreligion was flawed:

It is clear that in adopting regular church attendance as the main evidence as to whether a person was religious or not, historians have adopted the criteria of the clergy of the time, rather than those of the working class people themselves, whose criteria were often quite different.²³

²⁰ Green Religion in the Age of Decline p.84

²¹ Meller H.E. Leisure and the Changing City (London, 1976) p.80.

²² Cox The English Churches p.32.

²³ McLeod Religion and Society p.55

The challenge for any alternative interpretation has been to find reliable alternative means of measuring the churches' importance during this period.

One method has been the examination of the churches' 'pervasive' influence throughout society. For Cox, the ubiquity of Sunday school education and the religious content of compulsory primary education meant that 'hardly any-one escaped some kind of religious indoctrination.' The provision of poor relief by the churches further extended their influence, as McLeod explains:

many poor families which were otherwise little involved in organised religion, came to depend on the free breakfasts, and the other benefits and treats, provided by the churches and mission halls.

The same oral sources also suggested to McLeod that the churches exerted a significant influence on patterns of cultural behaviour too:

like Sunday school, the quiet Sunday had become part of 'decent' and 'respectable' behaviour, transcending the division between the devout and the religiously indifferent. It is the pervasiveness of the influence of the churches and of ideas derived from Christianity that emerges strongly from the interviews.²⁴

Green has also shown the extent to which religious festivals continued to influence the holiday pattern of the year, with particular celebrations at Easter and also during the 'modern festivals' of Harvest and the Sunday school anniversary. These survivals represented a compromise with the secular world. Harvest festivals, for example, were derided by some within the churches as lacking spiritual content and Green has written of the churches' continuing participation in the main rites of passage as:

²⁴ Cox *The English Churches* p.268; McLeod H. *New Perspectives on Victorian Class Religion: The Oral Evidence in Oral History* vol. 14 no. 1 (1986) p.35; p.34.

little more than an ungracious capitulation of organisational aspiration in the face of the overwhelming force of common custom.²⁵

Yet this accommodation with essentially secular needs nevertheless showed the continuing importance of that 'diffusive Christianity' defined by Cox, after the Bishop of Rochester, as 'the penumbra of the embodied Christianity of the church'.²⁶ The wide spread popularity of hymn singing, noted by McLeod, is a further example of the ways in which religion could exert an indirect influence through society beyond those who attended regular worship.²⁷

Green's 'institutional history' of the churches of Denholme, Keighley and Halifax helps to explain how Christian ideas became so pervasive. His examination of the 'associational ideal' shows that the churches were concerned to do much more than to organise services; rather they looked to be 'complex ecclesiastical institutions' aiming to secure:

the most extensive inclusion of all God's people in Christ's various acknowledged churches²⁸

In part, this was to be achieved by the ambitious building and rebuilding programmes which most denominations embarked upon and whose results were themselves, arguably, an indication of the churches' strength. The associational ideal also relied upon the formation of auxiliary organisations similar to those in Reading which constituted:

²⁵ Green Religion in the Age of Decline p.341.

²⁶ Cox The English Churches p.93.

²⁷ McLeod Religion and Society p.106.

²⁸ Green Religion in the Age of Decline p.182.

A total and interlocking system of participatory organisations, all of which ideally involved forms of *joining* or continuous *attending* [and which] had become part of the self definition of religion in the town.

In both local studies, these organisations were:

not so much, in intention, a question of what W.T. Stead called 'institutional side-shows' but an effort to relate to and include man's whole life in society.²⁹

Auxiliary organisations not only showed the strength and vigour of the particular denomination which sponsored them, they also drew within the orbit of the churches many who would otherwise have been beyond their reach, not least through poor relief and more general social work. The very existence of such organisations suggests that the churches of the later nineteenth and early twentieth century were aware that attendance at service was not the only measurement of religious commitment and that there was an important distinction to be drawn between formal membership of religious organisations and participation in the activities they organised. For Green, the 'associational model' overcomes the problem of relying on attendance at worship as the sole measure of religious commitment. Rather it shows that the churches' task was:

as much the problem of the management of a complex dynamic between (relatively rare) dedication and (relatively common) participation as it was the selfless crusade of the saved on behalf of the damned, in the way that contemporaries often depicted it; or, for that matter, the hopeless campaign of the righteous amongst the alienated in the manner portrayed by so many subsequent historians.³⁰

²⁹ Yeo Religion and Voluntary Organisations p.66.

³⁰ Green Religion in the Age of Decline p.199.

A third and final alternative means of assessing the importance of the churches during this period lies in the examination of popular attitudes towards religion in an attempt to divine what form religious belief took. Obelkevich's study of rural Lincolnshire suggests that popular religion there was formed from compromises between orthodox Christian ideas and pagan superstition. Religious messages were distorted to such an extent that popular religion posited:

a pluralistic, polymorphous universe in which power was fluidly distributed amongst a multitude of beings

whose 'Christian' input:

was never preached from a pulpit or taught in a Sunday school...what they [the villagers] took from the clergy they took on their own terms.³¹

Williams's research in Southwark produced similar findings - popular religion there was neither wholly 'church based' nor a purely 'folk religion' - but she is more optimistic in her assessment of the evidence. The continued popularity of and widespread participation in Christian rites of passage amongst the Lambeth working classes showed the extent to which Christian ideals underlay a 'dynamic and vibrant system of belief which retained its own autonomous existence within the urban environment.'³² Such 'systems' need not include regular attendance at worship, yet their adherents might well regard themselves as practising Christians. McLeod's research into oral history similarly suggested that:

Christianity had some degree of hold on the emotions and ways of thinking of a considerably wider section of the population than those who were active church members.³³

³¹ Obelkevich *Religion and Rural Society* p.308; p.279.

³² Williams S. *Urban Popular Religion and the Rites of Passage* in McLeod H. (ed.) *European Religion in the Age of the Great Cities* (London, 1995) p.233

³³ McLeod *New Perspectives* p.35.

The aims and scope of this Study.

This study attempts a comparative examination of the churches' role in society during the period 1870-1914. The three areas covered by the study - South Shields, the Deerness Valley and Upper Teesdale - were chosen to illustrate some of the different experiences of churches in large urban, developing industrial and rural environments. It also draws on evidence from a range of different denominations so as to enable comparisons between them to be made. Its primary focus is on the churches' role in the three communities examined and on their strategies to mobilise support throughout this period. Consequently liturgical developments and disputes within the churches are considered here only in so far as they helped the churches to win support. The churches' role in day education is also considered only in this light - detailed investigation of local educational politics is beyond the scope of a limited study. There are also references to the social make up of congregations studied, but constraints of resources and word limits prevent a fuller examination of a subject which is, in any case, well documented in other sources. The lack of oral evidence available for the study³⁴ means that little attempt has been made to assess popular religious attitudes beyond what is available from visitation returns made by professional clergymen.

Rather, the study concentrates on the actions of the churches themselves. An investigation of the *rationale* behind church building programmes follows a commentary on the areas of study and the sources available; this section also

³⁴ See below pp.29-30.

considers the financial implications of extension schemes for the various denominations and looks at whether the churches provided the means for the working classes to worship. Some comparisons are drawn between the experience of urban and rural churches in this field. Chapter 3 also considers the provision of manpower by the churches. It examines the impact of individual clergy and raises questions about the relative importance of laity and professional clergy in different denominations. The chapter concludes by examining the value of mission and revivalist methods as a means of attracting support for the churches. Chapter 4 considers the churches' work amongst young people. It explores the organisation, staffing and curriculum of the Sunday school and attempts to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of this and other methods employed to attract the support of young people. Chapter 5 considers the churches' efforts to win adult support and focuses on two case studies from South Shields to illustrate the work of different denominations at the beginning and end of the period studied. Broader conclusions are drawn about church sponsored adult activities, especially those for women, and about the kind of people the churches wished to attract by these means. Chapter 6 examines the 'social' work carried out by the various churches of the study and the thinking which underlay this work. It makes further comparisons between denominations and between urban and rural areas.

The study clearly raises broader issues too. Its comparative focus enables some conclusions to be reached about the relative strength of the different denominations examined and their response to the perceived problem of 'decline' during this period. The inclusion of evidence about the Roman Catholic church allows the experience of the Protestant churches to be set in a broader context. Comparisons between different geographical areas allow interpretations of the

churches' work to be tested in a wider context - notably the extent to which the 'associational model' of urban church life was replicated in rural areas. The study also considers whether the churches' provision of auxiliary organisations detracted from their primary purpose of spreading the Christian gospel - as Yeo argued - to the extent that they suffered a 'crisis of plausibility' which was, in itself, a significant cause of 'decline'.³⁵ Finally, the study attempts to place the churches in their true positions in the communities studied by examining their role in public celebrations, their influence over local politics and the support which they drew from significant local figures.

Sources.

Records produced by the various churches make up the bulk of the primary material used in this study. Much is from minute books which vary in their usefulness. Some contain detailed accounts of proceedings, others are little more than a formalised record of when meetings took place and offer little of substance to the student. Few covered the whole of the period studied making comparisons between sources difficult. Nevertheless, minute books such as those of the Ocean Road Congregational Guild in South Shields or the Middleton in Teesdale Wesleyan Chapel Building Committee supplied invaluable details about the organisations concerned.³⁶ Two other sources gave a much broader picture of affairs within individual churches. St. Bede's Roman Catholic Parish Notice Books contain announcements made by the Parish Priest to his Sunday

³⁵ Yeo Religion and Voluntary Organisations pp.154-162; Gilbert A.D. Religion and Society in Industrial England (London, 1976) p.184 ff.

³⁶ Minutes of Ocean Road Congregational Church Guild 1900-1914; Middleton Wesleyan Society Accounts of Chapel Building 1869-72.

congregations.³⁷ By their nature they do not provide detailed information about parish organisations, nor are points made in one announcement always followed up in later notices. Yet these weaknesses aside, the notice books do contain much information. Church finances are discussed in some detail and there are references to a wide variety of activities taking place in the mission. In short, the notice books provide an account of the weekly life of St. Bede's, often with frank comments from the priest to his flock. Similarly detailed in content are the scrapbooks kept by St. Hilda's Anglican parish in South Shields.³⁸ These cover most of the period studied and give valuable information about church activities of all kinds. The source is different in kind from minute books; it does not show why decisions were made nor does it reflect the disputes and disagreements which accompanied policy making. Only rarely does it indicate the part played by individuals in a given organisation. Yet it does give a picture of parish life over a long period and helps to indicate what the church and its leaders were trying to achieve.

Visitation Records produced for Anglican and Catholic dioceses make possible comparisons between churches within those denominations. Anglican returns were forwarded to the Bishop by the parish priests of the diocese on a four yearly basis and take the form of an audit, in advance of Episcopal visitation.³⁹ The records are not without weaknesses. The broken run is, perhaps, the least significant and the fact that this was a quadrennial survey does not

³⁷ St. Bede's Parish Notice Books (henceforth Notice Books) cover the period 1877 to 1914, with gaps in 1886-8, 1890-93, 1895-98 and 1900-1904 and are stored in the parish church. My thanks are due to Fr. Morrissey of South Shields for allowing me to use them.

³⁸ St. Hilda's Parish Scrapbooks (henceforth Scrapbooks) DCRO EP/SS/SH 14/2-8.

³⁹ Visitation Returns 1870-74; 1882-6; 1892-1912.

prevent significant trends being apparent, though some finer points of detail are missed. The forms are not standardised over the period, however. Within each survey, comparison is not too difficult, as the respondents kept to the format outlined by the questionnaire but comparison across years poses problems. Replies are, of course, subjective and the records must be treated with some care, although the fact that they were not intended for publication probably encouraged honesty amongst respondents who were certainly willing to use the survey to air grievances such as the need for a new curate or vicarage.⁴⁰ Under Bishop Westcott in particular, the survey explicitly sought personal responses, rather than quantitative evidence. Westcott's 1900 preamble asked not for statistics but for:

a further knowledge...of the conditions of life, the common opinions, the opportunities, the difficulties of the different classes of our population, on whose vigorous cooperation the welfare alike of the Church and State depends.⁴¹

Responses encompassed not only liturgical developments, such as the growing importance of Holy Communion and the changing role of church choirs, but also an assessment of the efficacy of broader church organisations such as clubs, institutes and Mothers' Unions. There are explicit references to the attempts made by the Church to keep the support of young people and to the perceived threat posed to the Established Church by other denominations. Broader comments about social concerns include moral issues - temperance and gambling - and socio-economic concerns such as poverty and poor quality housing. The prevalence of such questions amongst the later surveys clearly reflects Bishop Westcott's concerns and serves to illustrate something of the Church's attitudes

⁴⁰ Visitation Returns St. Mary's , St. Mark's , St. Michael's 1886.

⁴¹ Visitation survey questionnaire 1900.

towards society. Roman Catholic Visitation Returns are fewer in number than Anglican ones. In content they are similar, though there is greater emphasis on material possessions and finances. This reflects the limited resources of many Roman Catholic parishes as illustrated in the Diocesan Council of Administration Minutes.⁴²

A further diocesan source of evidence from the Anglican church lies in a random selection of letters sent to successive Bishops of Durham on a variety of subjects and held by the University of Durham.⁴³ These contain administrative material and also some controversial correspondence on a variety of subjects including a detailed series of accusations about the behaviour of the Rev. David Evans at St. Mark's parish, South Shields.⁴⁴ The source is invaluable for the light it throws on such disputes; it serves as a counterbalance to the official records of minute books and diocesan publications. Nonetheless it is limited in its scope as it refers only to the Anglican church and only to South Shields of the areas studied here. Nor does it contain copies of the Bishop's replies to the letters he received.

The tradition and practice of independence in Nonconformist churches meant that fewer sources of this type were produced by them; circuit records in the Methodist denominations take the form of minute books with limited qualitative comment. Presbyterian and Baptist congregations left nothing other than individual church records in South Shields and even these do not survive for

⁴² Diocesan Council of Administration Records Books 1-4 (1869-1914) are held in the Diocesan Archive at Bishop's House, Newcastle. My thanks are due to Robin Gard for allowing me access to them.

⁴³ The Archive is held by the Durham University Library Department of Archives and Special Collections under the title Auckland 84.

⁴⁴ See below pp. 117-123.

Baptist congregations in the Deerness Valley and Teesdale. The Durham and Newcastle Congregational Association did require its members to provide statistical information and some of this was published in its annual reports. On the whole, however, the reports tend to dwell on matters concerning the wider association rather than individual member churches. They therefore provide interesting information about broader issues, but rarely enable more detailed investigation of specific churches.

Yet if qualitative evidence about Nonconformity is limited to records from individual congregations, quantitative evidence is available. Methodism in all its forms was assiduous in provision of statistical evidence; Primitive Methodism in particular has left a rich legacy of information. Returns exist for the Middleton in Teesdale and Waterhouses circuits and provide valuable information not only about membership numbers in general, but also about organisations such as Sunday schools, Bands of Hope and Christian Endeavour Societies. Neither set, however, covers the period before 1892 and the Teesdale records do not start until 1897.⁴⁵ In South Shields, Primitive Methodist returns cover a longer period (1875-1914) but refer only to Sunday school statistics.⁴⁶ This makes direct comparison - even in this well recorded denomination - difficult. Amongst the Wesleyan Methodists material is even scarcer. Only Teesdale of the three areas studied retains a set of Wesleyan Circuit returns and, whilst these are detailed in content and cover the period 1887-1906, they refer only to Sunday school

⁴⁵ Waterhouses Primitive Methodist Circuit (henceforth Waterhouses PMC) Returns 1892-1914; Middleton in Teesdale Primitive Methodist Circuit (henceforth Middleton PMC) Returns 1897-1914.

⁴⁶ South Shields Primitive Methodist Circuit (henceforth South Shields PMC) Schedules and Statistics of Bands of Hope, Christian Endeavour Societies and Sunday Schools 1975 - 1923.

statistics.⁴⁷ A set of temperance schedules for the same circuit appears to have served both an interdenominational body and a later Wesleyan version and offered little of value.⁴⁸ Amongst Old Dissent, information proved even harder to find. No district level statistical information seems to have survived for any of the other Protestant Nonconformist denominations.

Statistical returns from the Anglican church seem to have been less rigorously collected than in Methodism. Useful records do survive at the level of individual churches - confirmation lists, for example - but diocesan records seem less reliable. The reliability of statistics printed in the Durham Diocesan Calendar, for example, is open to doubt, not least as many churches appear routinely to have returned the same membership figures to this annual publication. The accuracy of the statistical sections of Anglican Visitation Returns likewise depended much on the personality of individual incumbents. Several made little effort to respond to questions such as those of 1908 which required them to calculate both the proportion of 'grown men' amongst their total communicants and the proportion of the 'church population' in the parish who regularly attended morning and evening prayer. This apparently casual approach to statistics may reflect the Church of England's perception of itself as the national church, open to all and hence not needing to provide statistics of committed supporters. Roman Catholicism enjoyed no such advantages, and fears of 'Leakage' during the mid century encouraged careful calculations of support. The Diocesan *Status Animarum* provides statistics of the estimated size of the Catholic population - lapsed and practising - in the area of any Catholic parish and of the births,

⁴⁷ Teesdale Wesleyan Circuit (henceforth TWC) Sunday School Schedules 1887-1906.

⁴⁸ TWC Temperance Schedules 1889-1906.

marriages and deaths within that population. It also records attendance at Mass on 'normal' Sundays (taken over an average of three Sundays to avoid factors such as seasonal variation), on holidays and at Easter. It thus enables statistical comparisons between different Roman Catholic congregations to be made in a way not possible amongst the other denominations surveyed.⁴⁹

A further source of primary evidence produced by the churches of the period lies in parish magazines. Only Anglican magazines appear to have survived, and these for a limited number of parishes only. For those parishes where they do exist - such as St. Hilda's and St. Stephen's South Shields - they are a valuable source of evidence about parochial organisations. Clearly their content was directed at a sympathetic and limited audience but they do supply valuable information about the Church's concerns. This is available in a more personalised form in the writings of Canon Savage, vicar of St. Hilda's, South Shields, whose handbook on the duties of a parish priest provided an insight into how the Church's work in South Shields was perceived by one of the town's notable churchmen.⁵⁰

Church and chapel based activities were regularly reported in local newspapers covering the areas of the study. The Shields Gazette had a daily column of local news alongside its reporting of national issues. It also regularly advertised coming events in churches and chapels. Both the Teesdale Mercury and the Durham Chronicle covered areas much larger than those included in this

⁴⁹ Status Animarum 1847-1912.

⁵⁰ Savage H.E. Pastoral Visitation (Newcastle, 1905).

study and upper Teesdale and the Deerness Valley thus had to share their pages with a number of other settlements. Both papers were also weekly, thus preventing the detailed reporting evident in the Gazette. Nevertheless, each had a specific local news section which catered for the communities studied. The amount of space devoted to reporting events sponsored by religious organisations indicates something of the importance of the churches in local communities. Indeed, in both the Teesdale Mercury and the Durham Chronicle the space devoted to such events seems to have increased as time progressed - a reflection, in the Chronicle's case, of the growing stability of the communities concerned. Correspondence columns also pay tribute to the primacy of religious matters as an issue of civic concern, though some of their content was controversial to the point of being of little objective value. Caution must be exercised in dealing with local newspapers in other ways too. Their reporting often relied on unpaid local correspondents furnishing information with the result that coverage could be sporadic - both in the time span and the locations covered. Much of the material was probably provided by the religious organisations themselves; it was rarely critical of their activities. Of course, politics could colour opinions along denominational lines. In 1880 the Gazette carried an editorial fiercely critical of the 'Beer and Bible' sectarian alliance of Anglicans and Catholics which had just won the South Shields school board elections, criticising them for their failure to declare themselves as 'sectarians' in their election addresses; fifteen years later its editorial criticised Anglican attempts to finance denominational education from the rates as:

unfair to the vast majority of English ratepayers, who do not or cannot subscribe to the doctrines of the Established Church.⁵¹

⁵¹ Shields Gazette (henceforth Gazette) 17/1/80; 15/1/95.

Yet whilst this bias must be recognised in any reading of the local press, it does not detract from the general impression of support for church activities. Even in the Gazette this could cross denominational barriers as in its 1890 obituary comments on Bishop Lightfoot - 'probably...the greatest ecclesiastic of our time' - and Cardinal Newman whom it recognised as:

unquestionably one of the most deservedly distinguished figures of his age.⁵²

Thus, whilst criticism of individual churches and their policies was carried in the local press, the general climate was one of support for religious activity encapsulated in this comment from a Gazette editorial of 1910:

it would be difficult to exaggerate the services rendered by the great army of volunteers in the multifarious activities of the Christian churches.⁵³

The accusation that local press sources present a one sided view of the activities of religious organisations might, perhaps, be levelled against all the sources used in this research. Yet the subject matter of the study demands a clear focus on church and chapel activities which, as Green argues, makes possible the examination of 'institutional' history.⁵⁴ In any case, alternative sources specifically critical of the work of the churches in the three communities studied are by no means easy to find. Secularists were active in South Shields in the 1890s but seem to have left few records from that period and to have been in

⁵² *ibid.* 1/2/90; 12/8/90.

⁵³ *ibid.* 16/3/10.

⁵⁴ Green Religion in the Age of Decline p.21.

decline thereafter. Robert Moore's work on the Deerness Valley suggests that the emerging radical movement there did not reject the religious views of the Valley Methodists but rather developed new views which, whilst they pushed 'the religious response to its limit', nevertheless remained influenced by religious views.⁵⁵ Indeed, the concerns felt by all the churches had much more to do with a widespread 'indifference' than with outright opposition which might have produced written evidence of hostility towards the churches.⁵⁶ None of this is to deny that a counter culture to the churches existed in the pubs and clubs of all three communities studied; rather it is to suggest that investigation of such a culture is properly the preserve of a different study. At the same time, any such investigation must also avoid the trap of assuming that secular leisure activities and church sponsored activities were mutually exclusive. Further, the churches' often unrealistically high expectations of regular religious practice - and the fears of decline so evident in most of the sources produced by the churches when these targets were not reached - have served to minimise the importance of the churches, rather than to exaggerate it. The bias of the sources produced by the churches might thus, paradoxically, be said to be against, rather than in support of, the broader influence of the churches in society.

A further criticism of the sources used here may be that, even given the limited remit of an institutional history of the churches and chapels of South Shields, the Deerness Valley and Upper Teesdale, there are some omissions. No use has been made of oral evidence, for example. In part this was a conscious decision based on the time available for the study. It also reflects the assumption

⁵⁵ Moore R. Pitmen, Preachers and Politics: The Effects of Methodism in a Durham Mining Community (Cambridge, 1974) p.177.

⁵⁶ See below pp.328-329.

that few interviewees would be able to provide first hand evidence about the period which ended in 1914. Much of the important oral history work in this field dates from an earlier period when respondents from years before World War I were more readily accessible: the modern oral historian runs the risk of writing a history based almost entirely on memories of the views and actions of people other than the respondents themselves, which seems a less satisfactory source of information.⁵⁷ The lack of hard statistical evidence about religious practice in South Shields has been discussed above. Here it should be added that the town did not benefit from the type of religious survey by the local press which helped to inform Cox's and Chadwick's studies of South London and Bradford respectively. Such a survey would have been of invaluable benefit to this work. It is also true that this study includes only Christian religions. There were non Christian communities in the city such as the 'Afghans' in the docks area, but they have left no records of their activities. There was a Jewish community in the town too, but it proved impossible to gain access to their records. Nor was it possible to gain access to records of Protestant denominations such as the Salvation Army and the Gospel Temperance Union. In all three cases, the study has been obliged to rely on the local press for information.

⁵⁷ See, for example, McLeod H. New Perspectives

Chapter 2: Three Communities.

Introduction.

This chapter examines the context in which religious organisations worked in the three communities which make up the study. It begins with an investigation of social and economic factors in South Shields along with a brief summary of the politics of the town. It then carries out a similar examination for the rural communities which provide the comparative element in the study; the Deerness Valley and Upper Teesdale. It also considers the effects which paternalistic employers had on the lifestyle of these two areas.

The Borough of South Shields 1870 -1914.

Addressing the golden anniversary banquet of the borough in 1900, W.S. Robson, the town's Liberal M.P., opined that South Shields:

was, he believed, very nearly the best illustration to be found among all the boroughs of England of the astounding increase in wealth, power and population on the part of our country in modern times.¹

The borough he described was a union of the ancient townships of Westoe and South Shields. Its municipal powers superseded those of the Improvement Commission of 1828 and its boundaries were coextensive with those of the parliamentary borough. Both covered an area of 2290 acres, 1989 of which were

¹ Shields Gazette 20/9/00.

land, 55 inland water, 133 tidal water and 113 acres foreshore. In 1889 the town was granted county borough status and, by the terms of an Act of 1896, the borough was divided into ten wards. In 1901, the county - though not the parliamentary - borough was further extended by the terms of the South Shields Extension Order. This brought areas of the previously independent Harton township - Harton Colliery and parts of West Harton - under the control of the borough which then covered 2044 acres, excluding tidal water and foreshore.² Virtually the whole of the land in the borough had belonged to the Dean and Chapter of Durham Cathedral. Their lands were transferred to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in 1868, though the Privy Council later approved a scheme by which all the Commissioners' land in the borough was either sold or renewed on a 999 year lease, with mines and minerals reserved.³ Since the town stood on alluvial deposit and boulder clay and Permian sandstone covering coal reserves - worked as early as the fourteenth century - this was a significant reservation.⁴

Population.

The population of South Shields grew significantly during this period from 45,336 in 1871 to 104,228 in 1911.⁵ This was set against a context of high death rates - the figure for deaths per thousand in South Shields was higher than that of the average of the 50 largest towns in every year from 1883 to 1914 with the

² Hodgson G.B. The Borough of South Shields (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1903) pp.5-6.

³ *ibid.* pp.158-9.

⁴ *ibid.* p.3.

⁵ See Appendix A.

exception of 1888 - and of belated and inadequate public health provision. A Medical Officer of Health was first appointed as late as 1875 and in his first report Dr. John Spear alluded to the town's:

unenviable notoriety for being one of the most unhealthy in the country

His successors bemoaned the lack of Health Visitors and the need for a public slaughter house, neither of which appeared in the town before 1907, and whilst it should be noted that the death rate had fallen from 22.7 per 1000 in 1875 to 17.9 per 1000 in 1913, mortality in the town clearly remained high.⁶ Under these circumstances, the town's population growth was indeed significant. Boundary changes had an impact, but a high birth rate was clearly a factor too. This reached a peak of 44 births per thousand inhabitants in 1874 but in only one year in the period 1875-1913 did the Shields birth rate fall below that of the average of the 50 largest towns in the country. This was encouraged by the lack of opportunities for female employment, the relatively high wages available to young men and the tradition of early marriage. Yet the fact that the high birth rates ensured a surplus of births over deaths in the borough throughout this period, cannot alone account for the significant increases in total population. Migration was clearly central to growth. A significant - if diminishing - percentage of the population traced their origins outside the borough.⁷ It would seem likely that young men and women in search of employment made up a large number of the migrant population. Certainly Mr. Munro, Medical Officer of Health in 1888, believed that the population of the town was a predominantly

⁶ Borough of South Shields Medical Officer of Health Report (henceforth Health Report) 1875 p.4; 1913 p.2.

⁷ See Appendix A.

young one, though comparison with figures for the rest of County Durham might suggest that the population of South Shields was not particularly 'youthful' in comparison with its surroundings.⁸

The link between migration and population growth is further indicated by the coincidence of the relative decline in the town's growth rate in the twentieth century with a decline in migration evident from the census returns. Indeed, according to the then Medical Officer of Health, there may even have been a net out flow of residents from the borough during this period - a fact he linked to the growth of the population of the South Shields rural district by 24% in the same period.⁹ This slowing of population growth was viewed with some dismay in the town. In 1901 the Gazette had commented in its editorial on the town's fall from its position as second only to Cardiff in growth rates amongst the boroughs. The news of a thirteen percentage point drop was described as:

a rather remarkable reduction...[it is] doubtless with some amount of disappointment that South Shields people have learned from official sources of the result of the present census.¹⁰

Thus, as the new century began, the rapid growth of the late nineteenth century began to slow - as was common across the large towns of the country - though the Medical Officer of Health's Report for 1913 does provide evidence that this trend may have been reversed in South Shields in the period immediately preceding the First World War. D.M. Mathieson argued that:

⁸ Health Report 1888 p.2; Appendix A

⁹ Health Report 1911 p.10

¹⁰ Gazette April 1907.

a period of prosperity and activity, such as that which Tyneside has experienced recently, necessarily entails a considerable influx of workers.

This, together with the excess of births over deaths 1911-13 of 4,443, prompted him to estimate the borough population as at least 114,000 - a growth rate of 9.37% since the 1911 census return.¹¹

Employment.

Employment in South Shields was largely in male dominated industries. In 1871 79.5% of the town's female population over 20 was recorded as 'wives or others in domestic duties' (those in domestic service occupied a separate category); in 1891 76.4% of females over the age of 10 were listed as 'unemployed' and in 1911 that figure had risen to 80.1% of the total, though the figures allow for an adjustment to exclude 10-14 year olds not in paid employment, which leaves a percentage of 68.74.¹² Whilst the categories do not permit direct comparison, the general point - that paid female employment in South Shields was not the norm - is a clear one. Given further that the main employer for females - domestic service - occupied 9.9% in both 1871 and 1891 and 8% in 1911 then the lack of job opportunities for women is even clearer. Some of the industries which employed men were in decline during the period. Glass manufacture, for example, employed 2.9% of the total male population in 1871.¹³ The Tyne Plate Glass Co. of 1868 was producing 22,000 square feet of

¹¹ Health Report 1913 pp.61-2.

¹² Census of England and Wales 1871; 1891; 1911.

¹³ Census of England and Wales 1871.

glass a week in 1886 though it never quite matched the standing of the earlier Cookson's works (which, in 1850, had been awarded the contract to make half the glass for the Crystal Palace) and it failed in 1891. By 1900 all but one of the town's glass works were closed.¹⁴ A similar pattern occurred in the chemical industry. Cookson the glass maker was responsible for opening an alkali works in the Templetown area in 1822 and for the building of a vitriol factory on the ballast hills to supply the chemical plant. Like the glass factory, both of these processes created significant environmental pollution. A public meeting of June 1823 referred to:

a highly pernicious effluvia which in some cases has nearly caused suffocation, and is exceedingly offensive to the smell of all whom business or health render it necessary to walk out...¹⁵

The criticism did not prevent further expansion notably the acquisition of Cookson and Cuthbert's by a partnership managed by James Stevenson in 1844. This developed Cookson's Jarrow works as the Jarrow Chemical Co. until they became the largest in the kingdom under Stevenson's son, the borough M.P. J.C. Stevenson.¹⁶ However, in 1891 when the firm passed into the hands of the United Alkali Company the South Shields plants were closed in the interests of rationalisation so that only 313 are recorded as working in alkali manufacture in that year's census.¹⁷

¹⁴ Hodgson South Shields p.366

¹⁵ *ibid.* p.367.

¹⁶ *ibid.* pp.367-9.

¹⁷ Census of England and Wales 1891.

The sea clearly provided opportunities for employment. Ship building accounted for 8.49% of employment in 1871, 6.75% in 1891 and 9.78% in 1911.¹⁸ The period witnessed significant change, though, with the final stages of the shift from wooden ship building - with its ancillary trades of rope and sail making - to iron building. This development proved successful for men like John Readhead who, together with J. Softley, opened a small yard on the Lawe in 1865 and extended into new yards in the West Dock in 1880. A dry dock was added in 1892. Hodgson states that Readhead's alone employed 2000 (including ancillary staff) in 1903 and the previous year had built eight vessels of 24,764 tons gross register.¹⁹ In addition to Readhead's, Rennoldson's and Eltringham's were also active shipbuilders during this period and there were also graving docks, including Smith's, the Middle Dock Company, the Tyne Dock Engineering Company, Moralee's and Cowan's.²⁰ The sea provided employment in other areas too. Whilst fishing was never a major employer in the town - 0.21% of the male work force at most²¹ - employment in sea and river transport was very significant, accounting for 21% of the total employed in 1871 and 20.3% twenty years later. The fall to 12.5% by 1911 (including those listed as dock workers) may be explained by the greater tonnage carried by more modern ships - the records of ships trading with the Tyne ports show that trade in the area continued to grow despite the fact that fewer vessels passed through the port.²² By 1910

¹⁸ Census of England and Wales 1871; 1891; 1911.

¹⁹ Hodgson South Shields p.325.

²⁰ Hodgson South Shields pp.326-7.

²¹ Census of England and Wales 1911. In 1871 and 1891 the figure was 0.13%.

²² Hodgson South Shields pp.318-319.

the Tyne was the fourth largest port in Britain.²³ This expansion was facilitated by the improvements to the river's navigation carried out by the Tyne Commissioners and by the North East Railway Company's building of the Tyne Dock in 1860. Tyne Dock cleared 1,422,000 tons of coal in its first year of operations; by 1902 - after several extensions - the dock cleared 7,097,039 tons.²⁴

The North East Railway Company was also a significant employer in its primary field of operations. South Shields was the first Tyneside Borough with a railway - the Stanhope and Tyne Railway was opened in 1834 to transport the coal and limestone of North West Durham to the port of Shields.²⁵ The Brandling junction line followed three years later.²⁶ Neither line was especially successful at first, and it was the acquisition of both by George Hudson, as part of his domination of the northern railway network, which recovered their fortunes. The South Shields lines became part of the North East Railway Company of 1854.²⁷ In 1871 the railways employed only 0.89% of the total male population over 20; in 1911 they accounted for 3% and significantly more in certain areas of the town, such as Simonside, where the Anglican vicar described the majority of his parish as employees of the North East Railway Company.²⁸

²³ Gazette 26/8/1900. The three foremost were London, Cardiff and Liverpool.

²⁴ Hodgson South Shields p.400

²⁵ Gazette 19/6/97.

²⁶ Hodgson South Shields pp.390-1.

²⁷ *ibid.* p.396.

²⁸ Visitation Return: St. Simon's 1882.

The expansion of the railways on Tyneside was closely linked to the growth of the coal industry. Census returns suggest that 1.6% of the male population over 20 in 1871 were involved in coal mining, with a further 2.6% involved in general 'mining'. In 1911, 15.27% of the male population over 10 was employed in mining and quarrying.²⁹ Much of this expansion was engineered by the Harton Coal Company which, in the 1840s, took on the coal royalties which J.R. Brandling had previously acquired from the Dean and Chapter. Though the borough's earliest colliery - the Templetown pit - had by then closed, the Company did acquire the Hilda pit. It then sank Harton Colliery in 1841, purchased Jarrow Colliery in 1855 and sank Boldon Colliery in 1866. It purchased Whitburn Colliery in 1891, which, although it lay outside the borough boundaries, did employ a large number of Shieldsmen. Thus the Harton Coal Company became a major employer in the town - Hodgson speaks of about 6000 men and boys in 1903³⁰ - and was also responsible for the building of various railway branch lines to its collieries. The plan to build a colliery at the Bents met with disapproval - correspondence as early as 1895 prompted the Gazette to hope that the Company would do its best to minimise any nuisance caused by the proposed colliery³¹ - and the project had not been completed in 1903.

Aside from these major industries, most of the town's male population was engaged in the service or building industries. It is clear that South Shields was

²⁹ Census of England and Wales 1871; 1911.

³⁰ Hodgson South Shields pp.380-381; Gazette 3/9/1890.

³¹ Gazette 19/6/1895.

very much a 'working' town. The number of men engaged in 'professional' occupations throughout the period only once barely exceeded 2% of the total, whilst those employed in local and central government never reached even that figure. The number of men who lived on private means was considerably less than 1% of the total. This did not, of course, mean that all men were employed. Statistics for unemployment are clouded by the inclusion of general and unspecified labourers in the same category in 1871. The 1891 census recorded 4,171 men as 'unoccupied' made up 14.5% of the total, though this percentage is inflated by the inclusion of 4530 males aged 10-15 in the total male population figure. The 1911 figures are more refined in that they enable a distinction to be made between those aged under 14 in work and the rest of that age cohort. As a result, it is possible to calculate a figure of unemployment amongst over 14 year olds at 2.8%.³² One year previously the Gazette had reported unemployment static at 3.7% in the town, though the strike by North East Railway employees in July and the lock out in the shipbuilding industry which lasted from September to December may have helped to contribute to this.³³ These general figures may hide the fact that Shieldsmen did face their share of economic hardship. In 1885 the Gazette referred to 'recent distress' caused by a slump in the shipbuilding industry; ten years later, when there was a significant depression in trade, short working was reported at the Harton, Hilda and Whitburn Collieries.³⁴ As Robson had stated in his 1900 address, South Shields, given its broad economic base in a number of industries, was in a better position to survive economic

³² Census of England and Wales 1871, 1891, 1911

³³ Gazette 31/8/10.

³⁴ *ibid.* 2/1/85; 10/7/95.

difficulties than similar sized towns which relied on one industry - Barrow and Middlesbrough were cited - but it is clear that, by 1914 there was a greater awareness of the problems of unemployment than there had previously been, evident in the 1905 formation of a distress committee by the borough, which had processed 6,229 applications for work by 1910 and passed 3,988 of these for relief works.³⁵ Something of the air of confidence evident in 1900 had been dented by 1910, though the pre war boom discussed by Mathieson suggests that industrial growth was still possible in the town.

Growth and Development.

The twin forces of population and occupational change shaped the physical development of South Shields. In 1870 the borough was still largely concentrated on the old township of South Shields, itself centred around the river front on the eastern edge of the promontory on which the borough is situated. Some expansion into the area west of the former Stanhope and Tyne Line south of Ocean (then German) Road had taken place as had some development of the area known as Green's Freehold.³⁶ In the following years both of these areas were developed significantly, the former in a more agreeable way than the latter. The opening of Tyne Dock led to a rapid development of housing in that part of the town. Perhaps the most important development of the period, though, was the expansion southwards into Westoe township. This process was led by the affluent, but continued until Westoe became integrated into the greater town. Indeed, so developed was the area that by 1913 the only possible way in which

³⁵ Gazette 20/9/00; 7/9/10.

³⁶ See Appendix B.

the borough could expand was southwards, out of its existing area of authority. Significantly, the borough Officer of Health concluded that any such extension must coincide with a clear town planning programme, the absence of which had blighted the earlier development of the town.³⁷

The extent of this problem can be seen in successive reports on the town's health. In the old town centre, close to the river, a combination of industrial pollution and building on unsafe ground made from ballast emptied from ships contributed to the prevalence of 'damp, ill ventilated, uneven and dilapidated premises' reported as early as 1876. Waterloo Vale was singled out for special comment. The sickly odour of organic decomposition made the area 'a source of menace to the health of the whole town'. The whole area, Dr. Spear reported, was populated by inhabitants who 'as might be expected...were of low character and unsettled habits'³⁸, not least amongst the sailors whose boarding hostels made up a large part of the accommodation in this part of the town. Further south, the riverside area of East Holborn consisted of high banks of 'wretched tenemented property' and experienced high death rates. To some extent, the problems were alleviated over time as the population left these areas, though the poorest citizens were often least able to escape from what became increasingly slum areas.

Much of the problem in the areas discussed so far may be related to old housing stock in close proximity to industrial areas. Yet in High Shields, the more recent development of Green's Estate between Laygate and Claypath

³⁷ Health Report 1913 p.79.

³⁸ Health Report 1876 p.17; p.20.

Lanes, was reported to be one of the most densely populated and unhealthy areas of the whole borough. In 1903 J.J. Boyd attributed the high typhoid rate in the Laygate area to the uneven and uncleaned streets and the building of houses without concrete foundations and wooden floorboards, often on 'made' ground.³⁹ Clearly the area was one in which enterprise had paid scant regard to the conditions of those who were to live there. South Shields also presents a particularly graphic example of the problem of overcrowding 'endemic' in the North East.⁴⁰ 63.1% of the borough's population lived in flats at the time of the 1911 census compared to 3% amongst the 75 other county boroughs and 2.9% amongst the population of England and Wales as a whole. Rents for these properties were high - the predominant rents for property in South Shields stood at 70 in a scale based on London, with the highest rents in the country, as a standard of 100. Whilst the mean rental in Shields was higher than the average for provincial industrial towns (3/10½ compared to 3/1½ for a two room dwelling) this was compensated for by the higher wages paid in the town, though, as Sutcliffe has argued, such rents were disproportionately costly for the very poor and may help to explain the prevalence of low quality housing in the older parts of the town.⁴¹ The premium on space within the borough also meant that accommodation was cramped - in the three most populous wards the number of dwellings per acre were 46.9 and 37.7 in 1913.⁴² Thus a combination of cost,

³⁹ Health Report 1876 pp.10-23; 1903 pp.25-6.

⁴⁰ Rowe D.J. *The North East* in Thompson F.M.L. (ed.) The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750-1850 vol. 1 (Cambridge, 1990) p.441.

⁴¹ Sutcliffe A. *Growth of Public Intervention in the Urban Environment during the Nineteenth Century* in Johnson J.H. and Pooley C.G. (eds.) The Structure of Nineteenth Century Cities (Beckenham, 1982) p.118. South Shields figures from Health Report 1913 pp.47-50.

⁴² Health Report 1913 p.54. The wards were Laygate, Rekendyke and Deans.

limited space and the local preference for 'flat' dwellings meant that, in 1913, 32.9% of the population lived in conditions which fitted the census description of overcrowding (an average of more than two people per room); amongst children under ten the figure rose to 47%. Further, the number of persons per acre - 45.4 in 1911 - was over twice the average of the 75 county boroughs. Contemporary observers argued that such conditions reflected local choice. Dr. Mathieson, Medical Officer of Health, noted in 1913 that 'many families, where the combined income is relatively large' were 'content to inhabit houses with restricted accommodation and few amenities'. Nevertheless, the result was that large parts of central South Shields were characterised by:

Long monotonous rows of featureless houses; dreary back lanes; yards as substitutes for gardens; whole districts unrelieved by a trace of greenery in any form; 'flats' instead of ordinary dwellings.⁴³

Other parts of the borough were more salubrious. Housing in the Tyne Dock area was acceptable to Dr. Spear - aside from its very faulty drains - and the area around Eldon Street was:

an almost new and rapidly expanding portion of the borough...inhabited by the more respectable of the artizan class, or the class immediately above them in the social scale.⁴⁴

Whilst expansion threatened it, Westoe retained its atmosphere of gentility too. Such residential differentiation was clearly linked to economic factors; the cyclical stagnation in land and building costs enabled the more affluent members

⁴³ Health Report 1913 p.73; p.74; p.79.

⁴⁴ Hcalth Report 1876 p.23.

of the skilled working classes and lower middle classes to spread out of the city centres yet prevented the bulk of the working classes - whose bread winners lived close to work for convenience - from entering the 'villa zone'. It should, however, be added that these economic factors did not create entirely homogenous areas in the towns; thus in South Shields the central area around Ogle Terrace, for example, continued to house some of the wealthiest inhabitants of the town.⁴⁵

Politics.

South Shields returned Liberal M.P.s in every election from 1885 until 1910. Pelling sees this as a reflection both of the social structure of the town and of the relative strength of Protestant Nonconformity there. The Liberal cause was further strengthened by the popularity of W.S. Robson, M.P. from 1895 onwards and, ultimately, Attorney General in Asquith's government. Certainly the South Shields electorate had, on average, fewer Conservative voters than did the neighbouring borough of Sunderland.⁴⁶ Yet in only one of the six elections held between 1885 and 1910 did the Conservatives attract less than 30% of the total vote. Though often bolstered by an Irish vote reckoned to account for over 10% of the electorate in 1885,⁴⁷ the cause of the 'Establishment' commanded at the very least a significant minority of supporters in the town. Yet it is the continuing strength of traditional Liberalism which is important in the light of widely held opinions that the growth of labour politics helped to undermine the churches'

⁴⁵ See Rodger R. *Rents and ground rents: Housing and the land market in nineteenth century Britain* in Johnson and Pooley *Nineteenth Century Cities* p.63; p.67.

⁴⁶ Pelling H. *A Social Geography of British Elections 1885-1910* (1968) p.323; pp.326-7. The average Conservative and Unionist vote over the six elections between 1885 and 1910 was 39.0% in South Shields and 47.4% in Sunderland.

⁴⁷ Newcastle Daily Chronicle 21/11/85 in *ibid.* p.330.

support amongst the working classes. Of course, the continuing success of the Liberal party in South Shields need not mean that socialist alternatives did not exist there - indeed, Canon Bilbrough referred to an 'extreme socialism which is bitterly anti-religious' in his 1908 visitation return⁴⁸ - nor that class conflict did not take place in the town. The Gazette refers to major unrest amongst railway workers and seamen in 1910 which occurred alongside the contemporary eight hour dispute in the coalfield. The presence of union leaders - Havelock Wilson and Tom Mann both addressed the Shields seamen - helped to convince the newspaper's leader writer that strikes were 'especially prevalent' in 1910 and their influence may have been a factor in persuading employers to enforce a lock out which lasted for over three months.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, Robson's Liberal successor was still able to command a majority of 3,019 in the by-election of October 1910. Whilst it would be too simplistic to suggest that the continuing support for the Liberal Party is indicative of continuing religious feeling amongst the population of the town, it is, perhaps, possible, to suggest that South Shields' 'surprisingly Liberal' political history helped to postpone the development of socialist ideas which helped to undermine religious behaviour elsewhere.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Visitation Return St. Hilda 1908.

⁴⁹ Gazette 28/2/10; 9/7/10; 20/7/10; 2/9/10; 6/9/10; 13/9/10.

⁵⁰ Pelling British Elections p. 344.

Comparative Studies: The Deerness Valley and Upper Teesdale.

The Deerness Valley.

The Deerness Valley lies west of Durham City and two to nine miles from it.⁵¹ In the period of this study, coal mining was the *raison d'être* of the villages of the valley. Esh Winning and Waterhouses are mainly examined here, but reference is also made to other villages. Of these, Hamsteels/Quebec, Cornsay and Ushaw Moor were significant communities; East Hedleyhope, Hedley Hill and Hamilton Row were smaller settlements. Moore suggests that the whole district had a population of 'a little over 9000' at the turn of the century. More precise measurement is difficult. Changing census areas mean that comparison over time is not easy; nor did the census districts always coincide with village settlements. Waterhouses, for example, appears as a separate parish in the 1891 census, but in 1911 the village was included in the much larger Brandon and Byshottles district⁵². In general, Moore suggests that a decline in population sizes might also be expected over the period studied, since the act of opening collieries required a greater labour force than working them, a fact recognised by the incumbent at Esh in 1886:

the great increase of 900 to over 4000 was in the previous decade⁵³

⁵¹ See Appendix B.

⁵² See Appendix A

⁵³ Visitation Return Esh 1886. The ecclesiastical parish of Esh included Esh, Langley Park and Ushaw Moor as well as Esh Winning. Population figures for the whole parish must therefore be scaled down with reference to Esh Winning alone.

In the stages of expansion, the population growth seems to have been fed by inward migration. Moore 'sensibly expects' to find a large percentage of unmarried men amongst the migrants; Emery suggests that 80-90% of the population of the villages was under 40 and points to a high number of 20-30 year old males. Both authors refer to an Irish presence in the valley; Moore sees Ushaw Moor as a centre of Irish migration and Emery notes local references to 'Little Ireland' north of Priest's Beck, Esh Winning, though recognises that its inhabitants included many born in County Durham of Irish parents. Both authors agree, however, that most of the migrants came from the North East - Emery cites over 70%.⁵⁴ The picture of a shifting and migrating population is further enhanced by the evidence of emigration from the villages. The Waterhouses P.M. Sunday school register for 1890 refers to seven children who had gone to either the U.S. or Canada and as late as 1910, the Deerness Valley Hockey club was making a presentation to its oldest member, who was about to depart to farm in Manitoba.⁵⁵ Fluctuations in population may also have been brought about by local factors such as the opposition to low seam working which provoked a movement of population from Waterhouses in 1899.⁵⁶

Just as the population expansion of the early period echoes trends in South Shields, so too does the demographic stagnation in the Deerness Valley in the

⁵⁴ Moore R. Pitmen, Preachers and Politics (Cambridge, 1974) p.67; Emery N. The Deerness Valley: History of Settlement in a Durham Valley (Durham University Department of Archaeology Occasional Paper no. 9, Durham, 1989) p.156.

⁵⁵ Durham County Chronicle (henceforth Chronicle) 22/4/10; Waterhouses Bourne P.M. Sunday School Registers 1890; Chronicle 22/4/10.

⁵⁶ Emery Deerness Valley p.157.

later part of the period. The difference between the early years of expansion and the later more settled period was made explicit by the Rev. F.G. Wesley in his visitation return for Hamsteels in 1882. Referring to his arrival in 1874, shortly after the colliery was opened, he wrote:

At new collieries the workmen are notoriously of the roughest kind and Quebec, our colliery village, had about the worst reputation in the county. It was chiefly owing to the large number of known Wesleyans whom the late manager brought here that it ceased to deserve this reputation, even if it now possesses it.⁵⁷

Whilst Wesley's comment clearly suggests that the passage of time was not alone enough to make colliery villages settled and hence potentially more 'respectable', it seems likely that the villages were developing in this way over the period studied. Moore also seems to recognise this trend, though he places it later, arguing that 'drunkenness, fighting and death while drunk appear in the press of the county, and the Deerness Valley, until the early part of this century'.⁵⁸ Any such suggestion risks straying into simple generalisation - and it should certainly be noted that life in apparently similar communities could be significantly different - but it would seem a reasonable hypothesis to suggest that the communities of 1914 were more settled than they had been in 1870 and that this was partly due to a simple passage of time as well as to the efforts of the churches. This development of 'respectability' was seen as a phenomenon of smaller settlements rather than larger urban areas - as the Bishop of Newcastle indicated in his 1885 address to the Durham Diocese Lay Help Association when he asked:

⁵⁷ Visitation Returns, Hamsteels 1882.

⁵⁸ Moore Pitmen, Preachers and Politics p.141.

What was it but practical infidelity...to assume that the problems of existence were too much for the power of God in our great cities and towns, though they might be overcome in our villages ?
⁵⁹

Fifteen years later, Bishop Westcott pursued a similar theme at the reopening of Holy Trinity church in Darlington, when he argued that the problems of life in the villages had improved over the last ten years, but that the towns still posed problems as:

there they had to deal with what was called the residuum - that class which preferred sanitary anarchy to a healthy life⁶⁰

Thus, whilst the pattern of migration into the villages was similar to that into South Shields, its effects seem to have been different.

A further significant difference between South Shields and the valley communities lies in the nature of employment. Where the town had a diverse economy the Deerness Valley was dominated by coal during this period. Mining began at Hedleyhope in 1836 and in 1855 drift mining was begun at Waterhouses by Pease and Partners. It was, however, the 1857 opening of the Durham to Waterhouses railway which facilitated expansion in the area. Waterhouses was developed to a point where it was raising 530 tons of coal a day by 1914 and Pease and Partners also sank Esh Winning Colliery in 1866. Their importance to the area was extended by their acquisition of Ushaw Moor colliery from Chaytor in 1883. The Weardale Iron Company (later the Weardale Steel, Coke and Iron Company) mined at Hedley Hill to feed its Tow Law furnaces; working at the pit was scaled down when these were closed in 1904. Hedleyhope and East

⁵⁹ Chronicle 24/7/85.

⁶⁰ *ibid.* 6/4/00.

Hedleyhope were mined by Sir Basil Samuelson whilst Cornsay and Hamsteels were opened by Ferens and Love and Johnson and Reay in 1869 and 1867 respectively.⁶¹ The mines were by far the main employers in the villages. Moore suggests that at least 70% of the male population of the villages was employed in mining until 1939.⁶² Waterhouses visitation returns refer to 'a few' farm servants in 1882; four years later the population was described as 'all miners and labourers'. In 1896 the Esh returns speak of a population 'almost entirely miners and cokemen'.⁶³ This homogeneity of employment made possible a direct relationship between economic fluctuations and village life in a way less likely in the more divergent community of South Shields. Even those not directly employed in the collieries - such as the employees of the Co-operative society who were the second largest occupational group in the villages⁶⁴ - relied on them for their well being. Only the relatively small agricultural sector might be excluded from this dependence on the fortunes of the coal trade. This trade was marked by a phase of significant growth in the 1880s (following the expansion of the iron industry after the discovery of the Bessemer process) which peaked in the early 1890s. There was then a further boom around the Boer War, followed by a steady (and, in effect, long term) decline thereafter, masked only by the demands of World War I. Moore argues significantly that, whilst there is evidence of tension between employers and employees in the years before 1914, the main conflict came after the war. It was this relative period of prosperity in

⁶¹ Emery Decrness Valley pp.125-138; Moore Pitmen, Preachers and Politics pp.64-6.

⁶² Moore Pitmen, Preachers and Politics p.244.

⁶³ Visitation Returns Waterhouses 1882; 1886; Esh 1896.

⁶⁴ Moore Pitmen, Preachers and Politics p.73.

the coal industry which made possible the paternalistic approach to management which so characterised the villages during this period.

Upper Teesdale.

Teesdale as a whole covers a wide area, from the river's source at Tees Head in Cumbria south east to Barnard Castle. The river flows 50 km to Darlington, falling 2,400 feet as it does. It formed the boundary between the counties of Durham and Yorkshire and the dale includes settlements on either side of that division. Here, however, a much smaller area has been considered. Several factors influenced this decision, not least the need to limit the scope of the investigation to a manageable size. In doing so, significant omissions have been made. Barnard Castle as the nearest large market town and centre of communications might repay some study. It certainly provided a breadth of religious activities not available in the upper dale. That being said, however, the communities of the area did enjoy an economic cohesion through the prevalence of lead mining and the decline of that industry in this period makes the upper dale worthy of study in its own right. Thanks largely to the mining industry, the upper dale had an identity of its own, centred on Middleton-in-Teesdale (henceforth Middleton) as 'Capital of Upper Teesdale'.⁶⁵ This study examines Middleton parish and its four townships on the north side of the Tees - Middleton itself, Eggleston, Newbiggin and Forest and Frith (henceforth Forest).⁶⁶ The decision

⁶⁵ Tallentire W.L. Middleton-in-Teesdale (Middleton-in-Teesdale, n.d.) p.4.

⁶⁶ See Appendix B.

to concentrate on the North side of the river was prompted by a desire to limit the study to the boundaries of the Durham diocese - as a consequence villages such as Mickleton are largely excluded from the investigation.

Life in the communities studied was much shaped by the geology of Teesdale. The settlements were isolated. Middleton itself stands at 750 feet above sea level, Forest at 1300 feet. Hunt refers to a miner's dwelling at just under 2,000 feet.⁶⁷ This made communication difficult, though the mining companies did improve roads in the dale in the early nineteenth century. More significant, perhaps, was the opening of the railway to Middleton in 1868. This not only facilitated the transport of materials for the mining industry, it also marked the start of a tourist industry in the dale. In 1871 'A Middletonian' wrote to the Teesdale Mercury suggesting that more private furnished lodgings should be built in the town, as it was increasingly becoming a centre for visitors to Teesdale and 'a more salubrious neighbourhood is not to be found in the whole kingdom'.⁶⁸ The railway further made possible the transport of consumer goods into the upper dale and provided entertainment opportunities such as the 1885 trip to Jarrow and Newcastle - which proved so popular that many could not get tickets - and the 1875 'Negro Entertainment' by a party of young gentlemen from Barnard Castle which the Mercury's report suggests was less of a success:

as an amateur performance [it] was fairly creditable. There was an average attendance.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Hunt C.J. Lead Miners of the Northern Pennines (Manchester, 1970) p.138.

⁶⁸ Teesdale Mercury (henceforth Mercury) 12/7/71.

⁶⁹ *ibid.* 30/6/85; 24/3/75.

In short, the railway did much to reduce the isolation of the upper dale, and is an important contextual factor in any examination of the social history of this period. Original plans to extend the railway to Nenthead and Alston were never fulfilled so that the communities further up the dale were left in a similar kind of isolation to those of the Deerness Valley, where the branch line stopped at Waterhouses.⁷⁰ Wesleyan Methodists in upper Teesdale were obliged to introduce a 'horse hire fund' to reimburse their local preachers on journeys of over 5 miles - a scheme which the Primitive Methodists shared from 1888 onwards.⁷¹ Bishop Westcott's confirmation at Forest in 1890, was the first since Bishop Baring's, nineteen years before.⁷² The altitude of the upper dale was a factor not only in its isolation but also in its climate. Explaining why he discontinued week-day services at Forest, the Rev. Mr. Randle wrote in 1912 that 'the severe climactic conditions at this level must be taken into account'⁷³ and there are frequent references in all sources to events blighted by poor weather. The storms of the winter of 1890 were such that the Mercury reported that coal supplies were short and stated that 'the condition of things in Teesdale is truly alarming'.⁷⁴ The remoteness of upper Teesdale thus brought problems - both of climate and physical isolation - not found either in South Shields or the Deerness Valley.

⁷⁰ Turnbull L. History of Lead Mining in the North East of England. (Second Edition; Alnmouth, 1985) p.53.

⁷¹ Minutes of the Teesdale Wesleyan Circuit Quarterly Meeting 5/9/82; Minutes of the Middleton PMC Quarterly Meeting 1/12/88.

⁷² Mercury 3/9/90.

⁷³ Visitation Return Forest 1912.

⁷⁴ Mercury 6/2/95.

The geology of the valley also largely shaped its economic history during this period. The mining of lead was clearly a central part of this, but it would be wrong to characterise the upper dale as solely a mining area. Unlike the Deerness settlements, the dale villages were not developed to service one industry. Farming remained an important industry in Teesdale - indeed, in 1871, Henry Pease defined Teesdale as 'mainly agricultural'.⁷⁵ Clearly his remarks might be taken to include some of the villages lower in the dale, but they were made at Middleton show, itself described in 1879 (when it attracted 'thousands' of visitors) as 'decidedly the most popular event of the year in Upper Teesdale'.⁷⁶ Nor was Middleton alone in holding agricultural shows. The Eggleston show took place annually - in September - and in 1900 raised a record sum of £159 in gate receipts.⁷⁷ Local farmers were sufficiently strong and well organised to have established the 'Teesdale Co-operative Dairy Association' in December 1905 to meet the demands placed by foreign competition and to enable a bulk deal to be made with local dairy companies. Upper dale farmers were involved in the discussions, with a public meeting held in Eggleston.⁷⁸ None of this is to deny the importance of mining in the area studied; yet livestock farming was of continuing importance in the upper dale throughout the period and particularly so after the mines closed. Indeed, separation of mining and agricultural interests is difficult since many lead miners were themselves smallholders. The London Lead

⁷⁵ *Mercury* 20/9/71.

⁷⁶ *ibid.* 10/9/79.

⁷⁷ *ibid.* 19/9/00.

⁷⁸ *ibid.* 20/9/05 and 1905 *passim*.

Company's agent - R.W. Bainbridge - told the 1857 Select Committee on the Rating of Mines that:

the population is so mixed up, the farming with the mining population, that they are almost all as one

and Hunt states that 'nearly the whole of the upper parts of each dale were let to smallholders'.⁷⁹ Whilst the miners were rarely self sufficient (the altitude made arable farming difficult) many kept cattle to provide dairy goods and as beasts of burden. Bees, geese and goats were also common.⁸⁰ Such facilities contrast with the miners of the Deerness Valley, who had access only to gardens and allotments, and are in stark contrast to the urban lifestyles of many in South Shields. Not only were the smallholdings of economic significance, they also contributed to a tradition of independence amongst the population of the upper dale, further supported by the working of the 'bargain system' in the lead mines. The economic reality of the mines' collapse proved that miners' independence was an illusion, though it does seem likely that the smallholdings sold by those leaving Teesdale in the later part of the period may have been amalgamated by those who remained to make a living in the dale.⁸¹ The continuity of farming in the dale also points to a continuity of settlement and traditions not so evident in newly developed communities such as those of the Deerness Valley. It also made for more settled communities too. Hunt suggests that whilst Teesdale attracted some skilled workers from other metalliferous mining areas - such as Derbyshire,

⁷⁹ R.W. Bainbridge to 1857 Select Committee on Rating of Mines quoted in Hunt Lead Miners p.147; *ibid.* p.157.

⁸⁰ *ibid.* pp.151-2.

⁸¹ *ibid.* p.159.

Cornwall and Wales - they made up only a 'tiny' proportion of the total population, a suggestion supported by the Mercury's 1895 report:

It is a most satisfactory and pleasing fact to find that, in these days of migratory labour, the Company's present operatives are the descendants of a line of people who for generations have served the same employers.⁸²

Nor were the people of Teesdale keen to leave. Hunt suggests that smallholdings helped to tide men over difficult times in the lead industry and that the nature of mining meant that men were prepared to accept periods of unemployment in the belief that they may themselves benefit from discovering new ore.⁸³ This stability meant that the villages of the dale rarely saw the social problems associated with the arrival of young men into the colliery villages in the 1870s; it also means that there was likely to be a more even balance between men and women in the villages. It also meant, of course, that the collapse of the mining industry - and the consequent need to leave the dale - was felt even more keenly.

The collapse of the lead mining industry was so significant because, whilst other employment was available in upper Teesdale, lead mining had become of central importance by 1870. In 1857 the London Lead Company's chief engineer estimated that 90% of the population of Teesdale was connected with mining.⁸⁴ In Forest the population of 750 in 1882 was described as comprising chiefly of 'Miners who have farm holdings under his Grace the Duke of Cleveland'.⁸⁵ Two

⁸² Hunt Lead Miners p.193; Mercury 14/8/95.

⁸³ Hunt Lead Miners pp.195-9.

⁸⁴ *ibid.* p.4.

⁸⁵ Visitation Return Forest 1882.

years later the Forest mine was described as 'undoubtedly the richest mine in England'.⁸⁶ Newbiggin was the site of the first lease purchased by the London Lead Company in the dale in 1753 and Eggleston - site of the London Lead Company's smelting mills - had a population in 1886 made up of 'small farmers employed also in the smelting mill of the London Lead Company.' Middleton had been the centre of the London Lead Company's operations since the 1820s; the 'great part' of its population were miners in 1892.⁸⁷

The lead mines differed in their impact from the collieries. Most miners worked at a distance from their homes, so that the villages in which they lived were spared some of the pollution of the coalfields or, indeed, of the big cities. Only Eggleston suffered significant pollution from smelting, and even here the development of long vertical flues in the nineteenth century helped to reduce the problem.⁸⁸ A report of the General Board of Health in 1858 referred to Alston as being:

A district remote from city influences, situated in the midst of a most salubrious district, and containing scarcely an appreciable urban character.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Mercury 9/6/86.

⁸⁷ Raistrick A. Two Centuries of Industrial Welfare: The London (Quaker) Lead Company 1692 - 1905. (Second edition: Buxton, 1977) p. 16; Visitation Return, Eggleston 1886; Shaytor A.E, Almond J.K. and Beadle H.L. Lead Mining and Smelting in Swaledale and Teesdale (Cleveland, 1979); Visitation Returns, Middleton 1892.

⁸⁸ Turnbull History of Lead Mining p.48.

⁸⁹ 1864 Report of the Commission on Mines, vol. 2 pp. 63-4, quoted in Hunt Lead Miners p.209.

The miners themselves were usually absent during the week, living in mine shops close to the workings, as were the 'washer boys' who were employed to separate the ore from stone during the summer months only. Women were excluded from such work by the start of the nineteenth century, and the London Lead Company employed only boys over the age of 12⁹⁰. Payment differed from that in the collieries too, and further contributed to the 'independence' of the lead miners. The secondary sources examine the 'bargain system' in some detail, Hunt particularly illustrating how the increase in subsistence payments pushed the industry closer to a wage payment system.⁹¹ For the purposes of this study it should be noted that the bargain system gave the miners a sense of independence and control over their own destiny and that subsistence payments encouraged miners to remain in Teesdale even in difficult financial periods. This tendency was further encouraged by the main employer in the dale, the London Lead Company.

Paternalism in the Deerness Valley and Upper Teesdale.

In each of the areas of comparative study mining dominated village life; in each area mining was itself dominated by paternalistic, Quaker companies - Pease and Partners in the Deerness Valley and the London Lead Company in upper Teesdale. In neither area did the Quaker companies enjoy a monopoly of influence. The Roman Catholic Smythe family, for example, owned land in the Deerness Valley and were patrons of the Newhouse mission financing the building of Esh Laude church in 1800 and providing the land for the building of

⁹⁰ Hunt *Lead Miners* pp.89-122.

⁹¹ Turnbull *History of Lead Mining* pp.32-5; Hunt *Lead Miners* p.54.

Newhouse Church, opened in 1871.⁹² The family also built houses in Esh Winning and rented them to 'shopkeepers and minor professionals'.⁹³ This gentry support, along with the presence of Ushaw College (itself built on Smythe land) provided patronage for Roman Catholics not available in South Shields and which was exercised, for example, in the College's refusal to release land in Ushaw Moor for the building of an Anglican place of worship.⁹⁴ Lord Boyne also owned land in the valley and gave some to both Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist chapels in Waterhouses and a further one acre site for a residence for the Anglican incumbent. He built an almshouse at Cornsay and his wife was active in charity work with schools and churches.⁹⁵ In Teesdale the Duke of Cleveland exerted a significant influence in Forest, where he was solely responsible for the building and repair of the Anglican church and had sufficient power in the area to prevent the development of a railway on his Raby estates during the 1850s. He was also responsible for rebuilding farms in the period before the 1860s.⁹⁶ His successor, Lord Barnard, was landlord of all property in Forest and exercised his lordship to the extent that, whilst a parish council existed in the village, 'its powers...(were)...practically nil'.⁹⁷ In Eggleston the Hutchinson

⁹² Milburn D. St. John Boste and the Continuity of Catholicism in the Deerness Valley (Ware, 1993) p.18.

⁹³ Moore Pitmen, Preachers and Politics p.68.

⁹⁴ Visitation Return Esh 1886.

⁹⁵ Moore Pitmen, Preachers and Politics p.82; Visitation Return Waterhouses 1882; Chronicle 6/5/70.

⁹⁶ Visitation Return Forest 1882; Tallentire Middleton-in-Teesdale p.10.

⁹⁷ Visitation Return Forest 1896.

family of Eggleston Hall had significant influence, though did not always exert it directly, as the incumbent of Eggleston had cause to regret in 1886, pointing to:

The counteracting influence of a large body of Wesleyans headed by the steward and land agent of the squire who is the possessor of almost the whole extent of the Parish and is himself a churchman.⁹⁸

Networks of rural influence and patronage in both Forest and Eggleston and, to a lesser extent, in Middleton where the Duke of Cleveland was again the largest landowner, existed alongside that of the London Lead Company and seem to have been stronger than that of the Boyne family in the Deerness Valley - notably after the demise of mining in the dale. Yet for so long as mining continued, the Company was able to exert great influence over the dale communities. Much of this was benevolent. The Company followed a policy of trying to keep men in employment whenever possible. Thus it continued to employ 220 pickmen in Teesdale in 1884 even though lead prices had fallen and forced it to close its Alston Moor operations. Five years earlier, when the Company had been obliged to dismiss 40 workers due to a depression in the lead trade, it had promised to remove men from families with two incomes, or where some form of by-employment existed.⁹⁹ Such acts of apparent generosity are in keeping with the Mercury's 1904 assertion that the Company first promoted mining in the dale as a philanthropic response to the difficulties faced by unemployed workers in the north.¹⁰⁰ So too do the company's building schemes in Middleton where over 100 cottages were built in the period 1815 - 65. These houses were seen as better than those of the surrounding colliery villages partly because of the space

⁹⁸ Visitation Return Eggleston 1886. The steward was Mr. J.C. Monkhouse.

⁹⁹ Hunt Lead Miners p.192; Mercury 12/7/79.

¹⁰⁰ Mercury 14/9/04.

available (which enabled each cottage to have its own garden) and partly because of the ready supply of moorland water.¹⁰¹ As the Teesdale Mercury explained in 1871, Middleton was a tribute to the London Lead Company's paternalism, being:

clean and compactly built and [containing] a commodious town hall and several excellent inns...There are also school rooms, libraries and other institutions for the education of the artizan...The Company, through their highly esteemed agent, are doing an amount of good works which, though not all visible to the eye, is nevertheless the means of spreading happiness and peace...see the pure water springing from public fountains - the cottage gardens with seasonable flowers - the pleasant houses shaded by fruit trees - the fine and well made roads - and last, not least, the cheerful and contented population; - and ask how it is that the treasures yielded by the frowning hills have been so well applied to the benefit of man ? - and you will be told that "The Company" have done it all.¹⁰²

That the villages of the Deerness Valley bore comparison with those of upper Teesdale is largely a reflection of the similarly benevolent paternalism which Pease and Partners exercised there. For Moore, the relative prosperity of the coal trade made it possible for the company to exercise patronage over many areas of village life and thus to reinforce habits of compromise amongst their work force, habits themselves based on the assumption of continuing prosperity. Yet the basis of paternalism was not purely economic. Whilst the later Peases may not have experienced quite the 'agonies over the conflict between deeply held religious convictions and the steady accumulation of wealth' which Kirby

¹⁰¹ Raistrick London Lead Company chapter 1; Hunt Lead Miners chapter 7.

¹⁰² Mercury 13/12/71.

attributes to Edward Pease,¹⁰³ there is little doubt that their paternalism was based on a genuine spiritual foundation and concern for the welfare of their workers. Pease and Partners provided housing 'of a high standard for the period' for their workers; piped water was available in most villages by the 1880s and electric lighting was installed in Waterhouses in 1905 at the request of the inhabitants.¹⁰⁴ In material terms, life in the 'model villages' of Waterhouses and Esh Winning was clearly better than in many pit villages. The Chronicle wrote of the 'cleanly and comfortable appearance' of Esh Winning in 1890 and four months later published a report originally from the North East Gazette, in which Esh and Waterhouses were reported to have nicely spaced houses, each with a separate tap and simple and satisfactory drains. Each house had space for grass and gardens and villagers had a right to an allotment. Some houses - albeit the officials' - were described as 'more like villas than cottages' and the villages were reported to be a pleasing contrast to Willington, Silksworth and other pit villages. A self educated miner is quoted as describing Waterhouses as 'a paradise on earth'.¹⁰⁵ The company was still looking to improve and renovate its housing stock where necessary as late as 1912.¹⁰⁶

In both communities the companies provided educational opportunities. The London Lead Company ran a school in Middleton from 1819 until the formation of a school board for the town; it then rented its former school

¹⁰³ Kirby M.W. Men of Business and Politics (1984) p.18.

¹⁰⁴ Moore Pitmen, Preachers and Politics p.64; Emery Deerness Valley pp.157-174; Chronicle 24/3/05.

¹⁰⁵ Chronicle 1/8/90; 26/12/90.

¹⁰⁶ Visitation Return Waterhouses 1912.

property to the ratepayers until the building of a new school in 1892.¹⁰⁷ Attendance at the school was compulsory and enforcing it on their children was a condition of employment for the company's workers. Further, the company would not employ boys unless they had a certificate of attendance and good conduct from the school. Girls had to attend for an extra two years, until the age of fourteen. Hunt quotes the opinion of an assistant commissioner for the Newcastle Commission of 1861 to illustrate the quality of education provided by the company:

In Middleton-in-Teesdale, Foster found the best educational conditions in the whole of the north-eastern region he inspected.¹⁰⁸

In the other townships, the company supported charity schools and provided 2/- a quarter towards the cost of education. This facility was also available to those who wished their children to attend a denominational school rather than the unsectarian company schools.¹⁰⁹ The Peases also promoted education. Schools were opened at Waterhouses and Esh Winning, with rebuildings in 1863 and 1892 respectively, whilst further education was provided for by colliery institutes, provided by the company and run by committees made up of officials, workers and community leaders such as local ministers and priests, though the company maintained its overall control by the appointment of the Esh Winning colliery manager, J.G. Crofton, as president of the Esh and Waterhouses Institutes.¹¹⁰ A

¹⁰⁷ Mercury 16/7/90; 11/9/95; Hunt Lead Miners pp.236-243; Raistrick London Lead Company pp.56-66.

¹⁰⁸ Hunt Lead Miners p.242.

¹⁰⁹ Raistrick London Lead Company p.58.

¹¹⁰ Emery Deerness Valley pp.184-7; Chronicle 10/1/90

circulating library, sponsored by Pease and Partners, provided materials for study. The vicars of Waterhouses and Esh Winning both reported well attended continuation classes in 1892 and though attendance was 'always with a view to an improved position at the colliery etc.', the willingness to undertake further learning is in contrast to the situation reported at most of the South Shields churches.¹¹¹ Whilst neither Teesdale nor the Deerness Valley could be described as centres of learning - more advanced classes organised by Pease and Partners on literary, historical and scientific subjects had met with 'a marked lack of success' in Esh in 1900, and the Rev. Mr. Smith deemed Waterhouses unsuitable for such events in the same year, noting that 'the circumstances of the parish hardly permit this' - there would seem to be evidence that a concern for learning influenced the policy making of both paternalistic companies.¹¹²

Both also interested themselves in the broader lives of the villages. The school room in Middleton was a centre for social activities, both when it was in service as a school and later as the Assembly Hall for the town. The company also invested in the provision of libraries for the various communities, partly through its own reading rooms, as in Middleton, and partly by subscriptions to other reading rooms, as in the £20 donated to Eggleston in 1886.¹¹³ Ready Money Shops in Nenthead and Middleton were leased to shopkeepers who promised only to sell goods for ready cash, thus eliminating 'credit traders' who left miners and their families in debt.¹¹⁴ Indeed, the company's agent, Robert

¹¹¹ Visitation Returns Waterhouses and Esh 1892 and 1900.

¹¹² Visitation Returns Waterhouses and Esh 1900.

¹¹³ Mercury 28/7/75; 29/12/86.

¹¹⁴ Raistrick London Lead Company p.38.

Stagg, is credited with increasing subsistence payments to the men in order to reduce long term debt amongst the miners.¹¹⁵ The company was also prepared to help in times of difficulties caused by harvest failure, encouraging the formation of - and making an annual donation to - corn associations. Members co-operated to buy corn at a discount price and transported it - using company facilities - to a former lead mill in Garrigill, purchased by the company in 1800 and converted for the purpose of grinding corn.¹¹⁶ An annual donation of £200 was made to a fund for sickness and old age relief from 1827 (when the company effectively took over the running of the scheme from the men) until 1904 when, in view of the ending of mining in the dale, the fund was wound up and a total of £27,483 was paid out to the fund's 439 remaining members.¹¹⁷ The company also provided a medical scheme for its workers from 1827 onwards.¹¹⁸ The Peases carried out similar welfare work in the Deerness Valley. A supper was organised annually in Waterhouses from 1898 onwards. At first, contributions were stopped from the men's wages (a not unusual practice by the company), but by 1901 contributions from the men were voluntary and the supper was further financed by a grant from Pease and Partners and Lord Boyne. In that year 42 widows, 21 widowers and 63 couples benefited.¹¹⁹ A similar pattern is evident in the Deerness Nursing Association. In 1910 T.Y. Greener, the company's agent, criticised the men of Esh Winning for not contributing sufficient money to the

¹¹⁵ Mercury 15/11/71.

¹¹⁶ Hunt Lead Miners pp.182-4.

¹¹⁷ Hunt Lead Miners p.85; Mercury 18/5/04, 14/9/04 and 28/1/05.

¹¹⁸ Raistrick London Lead Company p.47.

¹¹⁹ Chronicle 1/2/01.

Association's funds. The company had put £100 into a body whose patrons again included Lord Boyne, whose president was A.F. Pease, whose secretary was the Anglican incumbent of Waterhouses and whose treasurer was the Catholic priest at Newhouse and which included the newly arrived curate of Esh Winning on its committee.¹²⁰ The Peases' interest in the welfare of the valley villages extended to the provision of leisure activities. They were patrons of the Waterhouses flower show, an annual event which drew attendances from across the county - over four thousand visitors attended in 1895.¹²¹ Ten years earlier, J.W. Pease had opened the show and spoken in praise of the arrival of Miss Downie to teach cooking in the villages. In a speech which might be construed as showing both the disinterest of the paternalist Quaker philanthropist and the self interest of the coal owner he stated:

He did not know of any art which was so absent from the villages about that part as that of cooking...if the table, or rather the cooking at home was in order, and the wife in order, the husband was pretty sure to be in order too.¹²²

The company provided finance for Esh Winning cricket club (of which they were patrons) and for the village's brass band.¹²³ Their manager was responsible for organising celebrations for the queen's birthday in 1900, in the course of which an effigy of Kruger was burned. Interestingly, the bonfire was lit by Mrs. French, whose husband managed the Station Hotel, suggesting that the temperance leanings of the company had been overcome on this occasion.¹²⁴

¹²⁰ Chronicle 25/2/10.

¹²¹ *ibid.* 9/8/95.

¹²² *ibid.* 7/8/85.

¹²³ *ibid.* 15/2/95; Moore Pitmen, Preachers and Politics p.84.

¹²⁴ Chronicle 1/6/00.

The Implications of Paternalism.

Any assessment of the impact of paternalistic practices in each of these communities ought to begin with a *caveat*; in neither area were the companies able to mould life entirely to their chosen pattern. Hunt argues that the London Lead Company's paternalistic style helped to prevent industrial unrest and spared Teesdale the sporadic industrial disputes which characterised Blckett and Beaumont's mines in Weardale. However, he also points to other factors which made industrial unrest unlikely including the settled nature of the population and the continuation of a bargain system which meant that miners sold the results of their labour, rather than their labour itself.¹²⁵ That paternalism alone was not sufficient to prevent industrial unrest is confirmed by the strike of 1872 - the major dispute in Teesdale throughout the period - which resulted in a defeat for the company (and particularly for its agent, R.W. Bainbridge, who had enforced a lock out against the strikers) over the issue of increased subsistence pay.¹²⁶ Clearly this one incident should not be used to suggest continued hostility between men and employers, but it does serve to temper some of the more eulogistic views of the London Lead Company's acts. The Deerness Valley pits were involved in the county-wide strikes of 1892 and 1912, though Moore points out that the Esh Winning and Waterhouses colliers (unlike their Hamsteels colleagues) voted for strike action in numbers considerably below the County

¹²⁵ Hunt *Lead Miners* pp.122-4.

¹²⁶ The *Teesdale Mercury* published a series of accounts of life during the strike from 10/4/00 onwards.

Durham and national averages in 1912.¹²⁷ Thus the companies were able to reduce, but not to eliminate, the possibility of conflict with their workers. Attempts at broader social engineering met with more limited success. In Upper Teesdale the London Lead Company's agent, Robert Stagg junior, imposed a system whereby all children had to attend the company's Sunday school (or a denominational equivalent) and attend a place of worship on a Sunday (with attendance recorded by tickets), even after the period when the boys had begun employment as washers. Stagg defended the system in 1871 on the grounds that some parents had been 'hostile or indifferent' to religion before the scheme was introduced and that he had always hoped that compulsion 'might be relaxed as the moral tone of the population improved'.¹²⁸ In practice, however the scheme rarely worked, as Morton recorded in 1895:

This coercive measure lead to all sorts of trickery and deceit, and this defeated the very object the promoters had in view, for it brought into being a regular trade in all those small personal articles that contribute to the pleasure and amusement of school life...I question whether Samuel Budget, the successful merchant, had any greater facilities in his youthful days for the development of his trading proclivities than he would have had had he been reared in Teesdale under this ticket system.

Morton cites the strike of 1872 as bringing this system to a close.¹²⁹ Nor did the company's attempts to enforce temperance amongst its workers meet with complete success. Teesdale does seem to have been a temperate area - the Baptist minister of Middleton told a Mechanics' Institute *soiree* at Eggleston in 1871 of his conversation with a local farmer:

¹²⁷ Moore *Pitmen, Preachers and Politics* pp.165-6.

¹²⁸ *Mercury* 27/12/71.

¹²⁹ *ibid.* 29/5/95.

who in the course of conversation said they were not a thinking [sic] population in that dale, and there was not a drunkard in it. He rejoiced in that information.¹³⁰

In 1882 the Middleton visitation report stated that intemperance in the parish was rare and Hunt finds similar evidence elsewhere:

The government commissioners in 1842 and 1864 commented on the comparative absence of alcohol from the miners' diet. In the eighteenth century lead miners were not renowned for their temperance, but the growth of Methodism and the increasingly puritanical regulations of the largest mining concerns effectively eliminated drunkenness from the region.¹³¹

Yet neither the paternalism of the Lead Company nor the vigilance of the Methodists were entirely successful in stamping out drink. The 1886 trial of the landlady of Middleton's Talbot inn for promoting drunkenness inspired some correspondence in the Teesdale Mercury including a letter from 'A Middletonian' who reported:

Men and women and mere boys had been drinking - scores of men were drunk, and lads as well, and behaved as drunken folks often do...

A second correspondent - himself implicated in the case - blamed the landlady for:

throwing her house open for cheap drinks in a place like Middleton, where there are thirsty people who can hold a lot

and the local police sergeant reported that:

¹³⁰ Mercury 21/6/71.

¹³¹ Visitation Return Middleton 1882; Hunt Lead Miners p.176.

about 100 people were in the house - men, women and children. They were singing, shouting, cursing, swearing and drinking. In fact the officer had never seen a more disgraceful scene in his life.¹³²

In the Deerness Valley, Pease and Partners also sought to inculcate habits of temperance. The company employed a full time temperance worker in 1880, whose ministrations persuaded 170 to sign the pledge at her first meeting in Waterhouses. Thomas Binns was appointed to organise temperance work in the company's villages at the same time, and he founded both a Band of Hope and a temperance society, the latter under the presidency of the Primitive Methodist minister.¹³³ Kirby cites a pamphlet circulated by Joseph Pease which described the history of the public house as 'a fearful catalogue of woes'.¹³⁴ The company also opposed any new public house licences in the valley until 1903, allowing controlled development then so as to counteract the new threat of the working men's clubs. Moore cites oral reports of the company sacking habitual drunkards.¹³⁵ Yet even working alongside other temperance organisations, the Company could not stamp out intemperance and reports of drunken behaviour in the villages continued to appear in the local press. In 1904 the Rev. Mr. Smith's reported from Waterhouses that there was still a large amount of intemperance 'though perhaps not quite up to the average of the ordinary Colliery parish'.¹³⁶ Nor was either company able to stamp out gambling. An 1895 trotting match

¹³² Mercury 28/4/86; 9/5/86; 19/5/86; 5/5/86.

¹³³ Chronicle 26/11/80.

¹³⁴ Quoted in Kirby Men of Business pp.62-3.

¹³⁵ Moore Pitmen, Preachers and Politics p.83.

¹³⁶ Visitation Return Waterhouses 1904.

between Holwick and Newbiggin for a prize of £100 drew this comment from the editor of the Teesdale Mercury. He:

would like to suggest to those sportsmen to do it a little more gently. £100 is, in my estimation, far too much for either village to win or lose over so modest an affair as a horse trotting match. Isn't a 'fiver' quite enough to risk ? ¹³⁷

In the Deerness Valley gambling took place in wrestling and quoits - both activities held in public houses.¹³⁸ In the field of personal morality the London Lead Company's policy was to force fathers of illegitimate children to marry the mother or to be dismissed from work, but visitation reports nonetheless point to many illegitimate children and much impurity before marriage.¹³⁹ One is tempted to conclude that this was an activity which even the Lead Company's 'grimly paternal discipline' found difficult to detect and regulate.

Of course, none of this is to deny that the companies did exert a great influence over communal life in both areas. The contrast between the Pease controlled villages of Esh Winning and Waterhouses and other Deerness villages sets the impact of paternalism in clear relief. Quebec enjoyed a bad reputation within the valley, a magistrate reporting in 1873 that 'Quebec was the most demoralising village in the neighbourhood.'¹⁴⁰ Various factors may explain this. One year earlier, the Chronicle had suggested that the large Catholic presence

¹³⁷ Mercury 12/6/95.

¹³⁸ Chronicle 6/6/90; 23/8/95.

¹³⁹ Visitation Returns Forest 1882 and 1912; Middleton 1882 *inter alia*.

¹⁴⁰ Chronicle 6/6/73 quoted in Moore Pitmen, Preachers and Politics p.140.

had helped to make Quebec a 'drunkards' village'; though the fact that the owner of Hamsteels colliery, Johnson, was also a Durham brewer who had not supported temperance reform as had the other owners probably had an impact too. The Rev. Mr. Wesley in his visitation return for 1882 suggested that industrial strife may have contributed significantly to the problems in the village:

People are still continually coming and going. This and the strike of a few years back has impoverished them. They are unable to buy Sunday clothing without which it is difficult to get children to come to Sunday school or the parents to come to church.¹⁴¹

As late as 1901, the secretary of the Hamsteels Lodge wrote to the Chronicle about the scarcity and poor quality of housing in the village - Moore reports that the protests came to nothing as Lanchester R.D.C. refused to order that Section III of the Housing of the Working Classes Act should be enforced.¹⁴² Such reasons, Moore convincingly argues, helped to encourage the development of I.L.P. radicalism in the village well before the demise of traditional Liberalism in the Pease villages.¹⁴³ Quebec was not alone. Ushaw Moor under Chaytor was in stark contrast to Waterhouses, its housing including wooden huts 'the most wretched buildings it is possible to conceive'.¹⁴⁴ Colliery management under Chaytor, who was not a member of the Durham Coal Owners Association, was far from paternalistic. A local strike in 1881-3 involved violent battles between workers and management and was broken only by the import of blacklegs and

¹⁴¹ Visitation Return Hamsteels 1882.

¹⁴² Chronicle 15/2/01 and Moore Pitmen, Preachers and Politics p.179.

¹⁴³ Moore Pitmen, Preachers and Politics pp.179-182.

¹⁴⁴ Chronicle 16/11/82 quoted in Emery Deerness Valley p.160.

eviction of local men. Its effect may be gauged from the Rev. Mr. Lee's 1882 visitation return for the district:

No open air preaching during this last year owing to a very deplorable strike having lasted for more than eight months¹⁴⁵

Four years later, his successor described the village as 'very bad', and this despite the Peases' acquisition of the mine in 1883.¹⁴⁶ Even in 1902, the Catholic visitation returns single out the village as neglecting Mass, though this may, in part, be explained by the distance between the settlement and the nearest church; a legacy of the Chaytor era which afflicted all the denominations in their work in the village.¹⁴⁷ Even for the Peases, paternalism clearly took time to show its effects.

Where paternalism was effective, however, it brought both advantages and disadvantages for religious organisations. The companies were active in promoting religion directly by their support for church building. The Pease family, for example, seem to have accepted that any other religious group would be an influence for good amongst their workmen and to have ignored denominational boundaries in their willingness to promote religion. The company was the second largest contributor to the fund which made possible the building of St. Stephen's church at Esh Winning in 1874 and contributed to the organ fund for St. Paul's Waterhouses in 1910. They loaned money and buildings to the

¹⁴⁵ Emery Deerness Valley p.135; Visitation Return Esh 1882.

¹⁴⁶ Visitation Return Esh 1886.

¹⁴⁷ Visitation Return Newhouse 1902. Churches in Ushaw Moor consisted of St. Luke's iron church, replaced by a brick church in 1913, a Wesleyan chapel of 1900, a Catholic mission church and iron school of 1909 and a P.M. chapel of 1913 (Emery Deerness Valley pp.177-9).

Waterhouses Baptists, gave two cottages to the Esh Winning Primitive Methodists for conversion to a chapel in 1875, were active in supporting the Crook Methodist New Connexion chapel debt fund (1871) and gave a site and bricks to the Ushaw Moor Wesleyans in 1900. That several of these contributions came from the personal funds of individual members of the family suggests that their philanthropy was motivated by spiritual concerns at least as much as by the desire for a quiescent work force. Moore hints that the Peases may have had a policy of recruiting Methodists to work in the collieries, though no definite proof supports this contention.¹⁴⁸ The case is clearer cut for Cornsay, where Love, a Methodist New Connexion lay preacher and founder of the Durham Circuit, allowed the M.N.C. Sunday school use of the colliery school buildings and, according to the Rev. Mr. Wesley, was active in promoting the denomination:

Great efforts are made to get the people to belong nominally to the New Connexion Chapel, and specially, it may be said, to detach them from the church.¹⁴⁹

Whilst Mr. Wesley may have held a slightly partial view - in 1892 he refers to the 'exceptional' problems of the Anglican church in view of the influence of New Connexion colliery managers who were 'violent liberationists'¹⁵⁰ - it does seem likely that Cornsay witnessed a rather heavy handed paternalism in religious matters. In the Pease villages, Moore argues that the chapels were not company controlled. This would seem to fit with the company's overall objective of producing an independent and self reliant work force. Unfortunately, evidence of

¹⁴⁸ All references from Moore Pitmen, Preachers and Politics pp.82-3; p.70.

¹⁴⁹ Visitation Return Hamsteels 1882.

¹⁵⁰ *ibid.* 1892.

conflict between the chapels and the company is difficult to find. Only the Waterhouses Wesleyan minutes hint at a dispute between local members and Mr. Binns - the company's temperance worker. Following arguments about rights to a pew in the chapel, the trustees ordered that a written apology should be made to Mr. Binns, especially by Mrs. Langstone:

for the assault [sic] made on Mr. Binns on the 26th. of July in the Chapel...a copy of the resolution be sent to Messrs. Pease.¹⁵¹

The episode provides a salutary reminder that the Methodist societies in the villages were not without divisions and disagreements, but is clearly insufficient evidence upon which to build a case for the deferential behaviour of the chapels. However, it does seem likely that they would be unwilling to upset the balance of village life by direct opposition to the Peases, especially as they represented the Liberal politics usually associated with the wishes of the chapels. In Teesdale the Lead Company also gave direct help to religious organisations. Its agents, firstly Robert Stagg junior and subsequently his son-in-law R.W. Bainbridge, were firm supporters of the Baptist church. Bainbridge chaired public meetings and lectures throughout the 1870s, returning from Exeter to chair a meeting in connection with foreign mission work in 1886.¹⁵² Stagg built a chapel and minister's house and provided £20 annually from personal income for the denomination.¹⁵³

As well as promoting religion directly, the companies also helped to create an environment in which the churches - and the 'respectable' patterns of behaviour which they sought to inculcate - could flourish. A commitment to

¹⁵¹ Russell St. Wesleyan Chapel, Waterhouses: Trustees' Minute Book 30/7/91.

¹⁵² *ibid.* passim. and 12/4/86.

¹⁵³ Mercury 27/12/71

education, a rejection of the evils of drink and gambling, living conditions which made possible respect for the home and family life and the provision of facilities for the pursuit of 'decent' leisure activities were all in accordance with the broader social aims of the churches. The tone of visitation reports shows that the work of the owners was not without effect. Waterhouses had moral conditions 'much better than in many agricultural parts of England' in 1882; ten years later, a new incumbent considered the Lord's Day 'to be fairly well observed in this parish'; in 1904 'a fairly good number' of parents were seen to promote an orderly and affectionate home life; in 1912, a third incumbent wrote that the parish had no problem of women drinking or gambling. In Esh, there was little infidelity and, whilst gossip and gambling were both cited as problems in 1892, the Rev. Mr. White wrote in the same year that:

Rambles about the country from midday onwards [on Sundays] are almost universal. Consequently attendance at morning services is poor

suggesting, perhaps, that the inhabitants of the villages enjoyed 'healthy' leisure pursuits rather than gambling and drink which seemed endemic in other villages. Esh was perhaps best described by the Rev. Mr. Lee in 1882 (significantly, perhaps, in the first visitation return after the secession of Hamsteels parish) as being 'in a fairly improving position, morally and spiritually'.¹⁵⁴ Given the reservations about the extent of the company's influence expressed above, there is nevertheless still sufficient evidence from the villages' records to support Kirby's contention about the Peases' paternalism:

This kind of activity aroused little hostility in company mining settlements not just because the communities concerned were

¹⁵⁴ Visitation Returns Waterhouses 1882; 1892; 1904 and 1912; Esh 1892; 1882.

entirely dependent upon the Peases (with every brick in the house stamped 'Pease') but also because it was wholly consistent with the outlook and lifestyle of a substantial proportion of the work force.

Significantly, *a propos* South Shields, he adds that the Peases met with greater resistance in Darlington 'because of the town's less deferential and more complex community structure'.¹⁵⁵

The influence of the paternalist companies was, however, in decline as the period progressed. In the Deerness Valley a secular culture which did not rely on Pease and Partners' patronage began to emerge in the villages.¹⁵⁶ In upper Teesdale changes were much more abrupt with the withdrawal of the London Lead Company in 1905. Economic reasons lay behind this. Spain had replaced Britain as the world's leading lead exporter by the start of the period and further competition from Germany, America and Australia meant that, by the 1890s, British lead had become uneconomic. As early as June 1890 the Teesdale Mercury recognised:

It is not likely that the English lead market, however, is ever likely to reach the high rates which were realised a dozen or fifteen years ago, owing principally to the abundant supplies from abroad.¹⁵⁷

Smaller enterprises suffered first. In 1895 J.H. Robinson of Barnard Castle was declared bankrupt. At his hearing he stated that in 1874 he had an interest in lead mines and other property worth £20,000; twenty one years later he owed over £2,200 mainly on money borrowed to keep his mines going as the price of lead

¹⁵⁵ Kirby Men of Business p.63.

¹⁵⁶ See below p.258.

¹⁵⁷ Turnbull History of Lead Mining pp.13-15; Mercury 4/6/90.

dropped from £26 to £9 per ton.¹⁵⁸ One month later, Mr. G. Brown told the Middleton Conservative Association that:

The mining industry appeared almost to be dying out. Foreign competition was so great that there was no room for speculation in a district like Middleton.¹⁵⁹

Larger companies were more able to survive such economic pressures, but eventually even the London Lead Company was obliged to quit Teesdale. Only quarrying was able to take the place of the mines as a large scale industrial employer, though by 1905 even Ord and Maddison's quarry had closed, forcing the area even more back onto its agricultural resources or obliging families to find work elsewhere.¹⁶⁰ Census returns clearly illustrate the effect of this economic downturn; they also show little change in the ratio of men to women in the villages, suggesting that, whilst some young single men had left the dale, many of those who had gone were families.¹⁶¹ The process was not limited to the end of the period studied. The 1871 census returns show that the population of Eggleston and Newbiggin had fallen over the previous ten years and the Teesdale Mercury reported that:

the diminution may be accounted for through emigration to America, Australia etc., and the removal of some families to the iron producing districts of South Durham and North York, where the population is enormously on the increase.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁸ Mercury 20/11/95.

¹⁵⁹ *ibid.* 11/12/95.

¹⁶⁰ *ibid.* 18/10/05

¹⁶¹ See Appendix A.

¹⁶² Mercury 10/5/71.

Whilst it is generally held that the lead miners were loath to work in the coal mining districts - perhaps because the terms of employment there did not appear so favourable as those of the bargain system - it is clear that coal mines close by, which paid higher wages, were an alternative source of employment for some. In 1900 the Rev. Mr. Griffith reported that some men travelled 2 to 5 miles to work - sufficient to take them into the South Durham coalfield at Woodland.¹⁶³ Others preferred to try to maintain their independence by moving outside the U.K. Evidence of emigration is much more plentiful for Teesdale than for either South Shields or the Deerness Valley. The process continued throughout the period studied, with the departure of such local notables as the 61 year old J.D. Little, mining agent, who left Eggleston in 1879 for New Zealand and F.M. Pinkney, a Baptist and long serving chief clerk of the Eggleston smelting mill who left for Colesburg, Canada in 1900, stating:

He could have been content here if it had not been for the compulsory slackness of the lead trade, and he believed it was God's hand that was directing him there¹⁶⁴

Five years later the Mercury reported that 'the spirit of emigration' was 'abroad' in the dale, with the visit of representatives of the Western Australian government and Ocean Pacific Line:

anxious, not to tear people away from their hearths and homes against their will, but simply to unfold to them the naked truth as to the advantages of this land for settlers [and] to forestall the Americans who are swarming into the land distribution in Australia.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶³ Visitation Return Eggleston 1900.

¹⁶⁴ Mercury 10/9/79; 25/4/00.

¹⁶⁵ *ibid.* 2/8/05; 5/4/11.

As late as 1911, the paper was still recording the prospects of the Canada as 'tempting'. Whether the migrants succumbed to such temptations or whether they found a new future in the U.K., it is clear that significant numbers were leaving upper Teesdale. Visitation returns for Forest in 1912 referred to a falling attendance at services because of the removal of young people from the parish after the closure of the mines; in Eggleston many were reported to have left to seek work elsewhere after the smelt mill closed and as early as 1882 the Rev. Mr. Milner had reported a falling population in Middleton caused by the closure of mines.¹⁶⁶ Such a demographic pattern posed challenges not only for the Established Church but also for the nonconformist denominations of the upper dale too. Unlike their counterparts in South Shields and the Deerness Valley, the churches and chapels of Upper Teesdale found themselves trying to maintain their position in a context of rapidly declining numbers throughout the period, rather than ministering to a growing or, at worst, stable population.

¹⁶⁶ Visitation Returns Forest 1912; Eggleston 1904; Middleton 1882.

Chapter 3: Changing Church Provision in the Three Communities 1870 - 1914.

Provision of buildings.

Despite concerns - contemporary and subsequent - about the declining influence of the churches in this period, in terms of their physical presence in bricks and mortar, this was their last great age of expansion. This section attempts to establish the extent and nature of this provision in the three communities studied. An appendix shows the main details of church and chapel building and any significant renovations carried out in South Shields during this period.¹ It includes ancillary buildings belonging to the religious bodies concerned - day schools, Sunday schools, halls and institutes and mission buildings. The implications of the church-building efforts in each of the communities studied, including financial issues, are then examined.

South Shields.

The evidence from South Shields suggests that the various denominations in the town responded to the phenomenon of urban growth with flexibility and enthusiasm during this period. As was often the case, the Established Church came late to the recognition of the need to provide for the unchurched masses of the towns, but by 1914 had created eight new parish churches - as well as a mission to seamen - to add to the four parishes of 1870. Similarly, the Roman Catholic Church, barely active in the town before the arrival of Irish immigrants

¹ See Appendix C.

in the 1840s, had two parish churches by 1914. Amongst the older dissenting communities, the Presbyterians (united as one denomination in 1876) had four churches in the town, the Baptists had three (the Particular Baptists of the Mile End Rd. chapel having become extinct by 1914) and the Congregationalists two. Of the various Methodist groups, the Wesleyans had four chapels in 1914; the Primitives six; the New Connexion Methodists three and the United Methodist Free Church, traditionally strong in the town, had five. There was also a Unitarian chapel and a hall used for worship by the Gospel Temperance Union, as well as a Salvation Army Citadel, newly opened in 1911 and capable of accommodating 1100 people.² Assessing the total number of seats available in these various buildings is complicated as records of the capacity of some chapels are not available. Assuming, at a conservative estimate, that all those chapels of unknown capacity had sittings for only three hundred, just under 25,000 places were available to worshippers in 1914: that is seats for about one in four of the total population. Such a figure falls well below Mann's 1851 aim of providing seats for 58% of the population, which Chadwick sees as inspiring the programme of church extension in Bradford. Yet even in Bradford, it had become clear by 1914 that Mann's target was an unrealistic one. Bradford Protestants built fewer than a quarter of the churches in the decade 1901-1910 than they had during 1870-80.³ The practical difficulties of building on such a scale combined with the reality of attendance figures and a recognition that the pattern of urban life of the early twentieth century was not comparable with

² See Appendix C.

³ Chadwick R.E. 'Churches and People in Bradford and District 1880-1914: The Protestant Churches in an Urban Industrial Environment.' (University of Oxford D. Phil. thesis, 1986) Chapter 5.

Mann's vision of the mid nineteenth century all caused churches to reassess their targets for provision. Nevertheless, provision for almost a quarter of the population was a significant achievement. Nor does this figure include other forms of religious provision. Many of the major denominations had missions in the town which further extended capacity. St. Hilda's Anglican mission had sittings for 200 whilst the Westoe Lane Baptists had two missions during this period, in Andersons Lane and Percy St.⁴ Ancillary buildings such as Sunday schools and institutes further extended the capacity of the churches. Nor does a study of the main denominations include those minor groups which may simply have met in houses or hired accommodation. An unattributed survey of religious practice in St. Jude's parish in 1891, for example, includes Plymouth Brethren, Apostolic Catholics, Quakers, Maxwellites, German and Scandinavian Lutherans, Christadelphians, Spiritualists and Jews alongside the mainstream Christian denominations.⁵ Whilst these groups account for scarcely more than one percent of the total survey, their existence does serve to highlight the diversity of religious practice in the town and the need to recognise that provision of buildings is not the only measure of religious life. Nevertheless, the continued programme of church and chapel building does suggest a healthy development amongst the churches of the town. Unlike Reading, where only the Wesleyans and Salvationists built new chapels after 1890⁶, Baptists, Primitive Methodists, Roman Catholics, United Methodists and Anglicans - as well as Wesleyans and

⁴ Durham Diocesan Calendar St. Hilda's Parish returns passim.; Robson W. B. A Church in Our Town 1818-1981 (South Shields, 1981) p.16.

⁵ Religious Census of St. Jude's Parish South Shields manuscript document (n.d.) enclosed in Auckland 84.

⁶ Yeo S. Religion and Voluntary Organisations in Crisis (London, 1976) p.140.

the Salvation Army - all built new churches or chapels after 1890. Whilst not equalling in scope the fifteen new places of worship opened in the 1870s, the seven opened between 1901 and 1910 suggest that the process of atrophy which seems to have set in amongst the Bradford churches was not happening in South Shields. Rather, the churches of the town contributed to the pattern of growth characterised by Owen Chadwick as 'the generous achievement of Victorian Christianity.'⁷

Others have been more sceptical about the churches' investment in buildings during this period. Yeo illustrated the detrimental effects of church and chapel extension on religious life in Reading, arguing that building incurred financial costs and obliged groups to focus more on organisational matters than on religious doctrine and lifestyle. Chadwick develops these themes in her work on Bradford, arguing that 'buildings do not prove numerical strength or expansion' and that many communities drove themselves into debt thanks to a programme of church extension which, by the end of the period, was increasingly recognised as an inappropriate means to garner increased support. Reflecting on the Anglican church in particular, she repeats Ward's assertion that 'establishment was a constant inducement to invest in white elephants.'⁸ Contemporary support for Ward's views may be found in 'Layman's' 1893 correspondence to the Gazette in which he argued that Anglican church building was an unnecessary expense since 'the churches are not full; many are empty, others partially so.'⁹ Yet there

⁷ Chadwick O. The Victorian Church (Part II) (London, 1970) p.239.

⁸ Yeo Religion and Voluntary Organisations pp.158-162; Chadwick Churches in Bradford p.81 and p.98 quoting Ward W. R. *The Cost of Establishment: Some Reflections on Church Building in Manchester* in Studies In Church History 3 (1966) pp.277-289.

⁹ Gazette 27/11/93

were genuine needs which obliged the churches to embark on building schemes. Secessions within existing congregations could require new building to take place. When Mr. Mason took his supporters out of the Westoe Lane Baptist church in 1891, they were just as unwilling to remain in their temporary home in a skating rink - 'that dreary shed in Ocean Rd.' - as had been the Anglicans of St. Aidan's parish who had made use of the same temporary accommodation in the late 1880s. Accordingly, the congregation of the Emmanuel Baptist Free Church was prepared to commit itself to raising £400 and mortgaging itself for a further £1000 in order to clear the cost of a suitable chapel to sit 400 people, opened in 1895.¹⁰

The simple fact of urban population growth further stimulated church building to provide Christian ministry to populations increasingly perceived as prey to dangerous influences. The Rev. Arthur Bowcock, newly appointed minister of St. Oswin's parish, clearly outlined this need when writing to the Bishop of Durham to ask for funds to finance a new church for the parish:

The need for a church here is tremendous - a road one and a half miles long, thickly populated, and increasing daily and NO CHURCH - to me - it is appalling !¹¹

The shifting urban geography of South Shields - such as the growth of the Stanhope Rd. area in which St. Oswin's parish was sited - was a significant factor in changing patterns of provision over this period. The development of Westoe

¹⁰ Robson W. A Church in Our Town 1818-1981 (South Shields, 1981) p.24; Hodgson G.B. The Borough of South Shields (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1903) p.279; Gazette 28/11/95 : 22/11/95.

¹¹ Rev. A. Bowcock to Bishop of Durham 16/3/05, Auckland 84.

from 'one of the prettiest villages in England' to a ward of 7,570 people in 1911 saw most denominations building either in Westoe itself, or in Westoe Rd., which connected the ward to the rest of the town. Purves reported in 1891:

Passing down Westoe Rd., churches and chapels of all denominations are represented, from the Established Church to the Salvation Army.

These included Mr. Mason's Emmanuel Baptist Free Church, commended by the Gazette 'for having helped to provide for the spiritual needs of the fast spreading suburb of Westoe.'¹² The building of the Shields Heugh estate provided a similar stimulus to church extension. The Rev. Lewis Evans urged the Bishop to facilitate the building of a church for his new parish of St. Aidan's in his 1886 visitation return, stating that his parish was 'clear of all dissent hence our great desire to build the church at once.'¹³ Mr. Evans may have exaggerated his case slightly; the Primitive Methodists had opened an iron chapel in Baring St. in 1883 and erected a formal chapel ten years later. The Wesleyans too built accommodation for 300 in Baring St. in 1884 (probably an iron church) and had erected a permanent chapel by 1903.¹⁴ As in Westoe, the churches expanded in order to provide for the needs of a new centre of population.

Building new Anglican churches to meet the needs of changing urban populations was partly inspired from outside by the church hierarchy. A special meeting of the Durham Diocesan Church Building Fund in 1884 was told by the Bishop that:

¹² Purves R. Guide to South Shields (South Shields, 1891) p.22; p.24; Gazette 22/11/95.

¹³ Visitation Return St. Aidan 1886.

¹⁴ Hodgson South Shields p.272.

The Church was bound to make an earnest effort to meet the spiritual need of this ever expanding population by the formation of new parishes and erection of new churches.¹⁵

The Diocesan Church Building and Enlargements Society and a separate Bishop's Church Building Fund existed to put these wishes into effect. Further help came in the form of Ecclesiastical Commission grants to pay curates' wages and to build clergy residences. As patrons of all the town's livings, the Dean and Chapter of Durham also contributed to financing the churches' work. Yet the power of establishment should not mask the local initiative involved in Anglican extension work. The parish of St. Stephen's, for example, was founded in 1846 in response to demand for a church in the east end of South Shields, expressed at a public meeting of 1838. A similar meeting twenty eight years later was the catalyst for the Established Church's expansion into Westoe, with the erection of St. Michael's following in 1882.¹⁶ Nor were Anglican parishes without financial difficulties. St. Aidan's church was consecrated by the Bishop in 1888 whilst still £1400 in debt despite the best efforts of its 'self denying and enthusiastic' parishioners. The vicar's entreaties to the Bishop were unable to persuade the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to give more than £500 towards the new building in addition to the £250 they had provided for the site.¹⁷ If St. Aidan's may be seen as a 'White Elephant', it was certainly one which taxed local voluntaryism as well as the financial resources of the Establishment.

¹⁵ St. Hilda's Parish Magazine June 1884.

¹⁶ Hodgson South Shields p.261.

¹⁷ The Rev. Luke Evans to the Bishop of Durham 28/10/86; 16/11/86; 17/11/86; 8/2/88 Auckland 84.

Of course, the situation for Mr. Evans was much rosier than for the Nonconformists of the town. Their investment in expensive plant was almost entirely self financed. When the United Presbyterian congregation at East St. made its move into Westoe Rd. in 1880 it raised £1,700 of the required £2,600 by voluntary effort. Here too the church opened with a debt of £800.¹⁸ Twenty five years later, the Free Methodists' move to Westoe (still regarded as an area of 'growing population') left them with a debt of £3,068. The limitations of voluntaryism in what was traditionally a 'proletarian' denomination were such that only £616 had been raised by local initiative, a figure which included an anonymous bequest of £200. A mortgage of £2000 left the church with a 'floating debt' of over £1000 and proved an important incentive to fund raising activities.¹⁹ Similar problems faced the Roman Catholic church. The discovery of quicksand on the site during the building of St. Bede's church not only put paid to the planned tower, but also pushed up the overall costs of the building to £11,000. As a result the mission had a debt of £7,000 in 1895 and a figure of £4,590 still outstanding - on the church alone - as late as 1912.²⁰ Of course, some help was available to hard pressed local congregations. The Free Methodists were hoping to receive a connexional grant if they could reduce their debt to within £200 of the 1905 figure and the parishioners of St. Bede's received £300 from the Catholic Diocesan Fund in 1881 and regular annual grants of £50 until 1895. The Barrington St. Baptists expected an interest free loan of £3-400

¹⁸ Gazette 16/2/80.

¹⁹ *ibid.* 22/4/05; 14/12/05.

²⁰ Fee W. Looking Back Over the Years: The Story of the Catholic Church in South Shields (Jarrow, 1976) p.7; Notice Book 5: 30/4/93; Visitation Return St. Bede's 1912.

from the Baptist Building Fund for their move to Westoe Road in 1880.²¹ Chadwick's evidence, however, suggests that such central finance was less readily available as the period progressed and, in any case, served to reward local financial initiative by matched financing and not to replace it. Individual benefactors provided a further source of finance. Laygate Presbyterian church, for example, was founded by James Stevenson in 1849 - largely for his Jarrow Chemical Company employees - and benefited from his patronage. Support for individual projects came from local notables. James Kirkley of Cleadon Hall, long established vestryman of St. Hilda's and sometime Unionist candidate for the borough, gave £50 towards the building fund of the Tyne Dock Primitive Methodists in 1910.²² Important as this outside assistance was, however, the main brunt of financing church and chapel building in nonconformity fell on the congregations and brought about debts which, Chadwick argues, caused 'distress and hindrance' in all denominations. Debt was a potential cause of disputes within congregations - even to the extent of driving out ministers - and obliged chapels to be 'inward looking', concentrating on maintaining themselves, rather than using financial help to benefit the poor and needy.

Certain records of the period support Chadwick's comments. The notice books of St. Bede's parish describe the mission's debt as 'crushing' and record continuous exhortations to the parishioners to be more generous in their giving. Yet the need to maintain buildings and to service the existing debt did not entirely

²¹ Gazette 14/12/05; Newcastle Diocesan Council of Administration Minutes Book 1 passim.; Gazette 6/7/80.

²² Mason E. *A Brief Account of the Origins of the Christian Churches in South Shields (1911)*, enclosed in Scrapbook 4/8; Gazette 29/3/10.

preclude giving to outside causes. There were annual collections for the Catholic Poor School Committee and for African missions. Sporadic collections were made for the relief of distress in Ireland and for other Catholic causes - such as Bishop Chadwick's Industrial School - within the diocese. There were also annual collections in support of the Little Sisters of Mercy's work amongst the homeless in Newcastle and there was a branch of the charitable Confraternity of St. Vincent de Paul in the parish.²³ Nor were the consequences of debt wholly distressing. At St. Bede's, 'outdoor collections' helped to raise finances for the mission. Whilst the sums raised were never great the scheme did provide opportunities for outreach amongst the congregation by lay people. In 1913, Fr. Byrne attempted to recruit young men of the parish to act as collectors in work that was 'most essential' to the church.²⁴ Outdoor collections also relied on the sound religious principle of regular, disciplined giving, a fact underlined by Fr. Greene's 1893 suggestion that his parishioners should give at least as much to the church as the tenth of the biblical Israelites' income:

For we have a greater abundance of Divine blessings and should therefore be more grateful²⁵

Debt amongst all congregations also inspired them to collective action. Entertainments - discussed in more detail below - were frequently designed to help relieve debt. Perhaps the most effective device for raising money was the bazaar, ubiquitous amongst the South Shields congregations during this period. So common were they as a means of raising cash that by 1894 the vicar of St.

²³ Notice Books passim.

²⁴ Notice Book 13 13/7/13.

²⁵ Notice Book 5 30/4/93.

Stephen's explained that future bazaars would be difficult to hold in view of 'the popularity of this method of obtaining funds and the frequency with which they [bazaars] are held.'²⁶ There are suggestions that the bazaar had earned respectability as the period progressed. Opening the Glebe Primitive Methodist bazaar in 1870 the mayor had spoken of his reservations about such events, associating them with gambling - a theme maintained by Professor Aldis in his address to the Nonconformist Ministers of the town ten years later.²⁷ Yet all denominations benefited from bazaars during this period. The Glebe Primitive Methodists raised £140: 14: 4 in 1870; the Presbyterians of Laygate Lane £472 in 1880 and the Chapter Row Wesleyans £555: 8: 3 in 1890. The Roman Catholics of St. Bede's themselves raised £740 from their 1898 bazaar, though no other congregation was capable of matching the £1026: 4: 0 raised by St. Hilda's for the building of the Young Men's Institute discussed below in 1874.²⁸ Funds raised by bazaars and entertainments enabled St. Stephen's, South Shields to create a renovation fund in 1893 which financed a series of projects in the 1890s: providing heating apparatus and coconut matting in 1893, new kneelers in 1894, financing a complete restoration of the building, costing £700 in 1896 and the installation of electric lighting in 1899. Plans to install a new organ were drawn up in 1901.²⁹ Bazaars were aptly described by Dr. Burton on his return to St.

²⁶ St. Stephen's Parish Magazine October 1894.

²⁷ Gazette 15/6/70; 27/11/80.

²⁸ Gazette 15/6/70; 9/2/80; 27/9/90; Notice Book 7; for St. Hilda's Institute Bazaar, see below p.229.

²⁹ St. Stephen's Parish Magazine passim.

Bede's to open a 1905 bazaar as 'an organised method for persuading well disposed people to part readily and cheerfully with their loose cash.'³⁰

Yet bazaars provided more than purely financial benefits. They brought opportunities for the exercise of responsibility within congregations - especially for women. They united congregations in fellowship for a common purpose, allowing lay people to make practical contributions to the life of their church. They were regarded, indeed, as a mark of a successful congregation. Fr. Greene's 1898 warning to his parishioners hints at the loss of face associated with a failed bazaar:

Bazaar goods don't as yet half fill the [store] room - Moral: work
- The great day is fast approaching; woe to us if it prove a
fiasco³¹

The patronage of local dignitaries further underlined the importance of these events and often provided opportunities for interdenominational cooperation. James Kirkley, for example, presided over the opening of both Congregational and Primitive Methodist bazaars in 1910, a fact perhaps not unassociated with his political ambitions.³² Bazaars were also a source of entertainment in themselves, offering glimpses into foreign culture - as in the Tyne Dock Congregationalists 'Grand Egyptian Bazaar' of 1885 - or novel entertainments, such as the photographs taken at the Chapter Row bazaar of 1890.³³ In short, by promoting activities which were inherently valuable, debt may be seen as a motor of church

³⁰ Gazette 5/10/05.

³¹ Notice Book 7 10/7/98.

³² Gazette 29/3/10; 14/12/10

³³ *ibid.* 22/8/85; 24/9/90.

life, rather than a cause of hindrance and distress. Whether congregations would have responded in the same positive way to schemes to raise money for outside causes is very much a moot point. Yet whatever its implications, it is clear that debt caused by building programmes was not something forced upon congregations, but rather a consequence of conscious decisions about church extension.

Churches were built not only to meet the needs of changing urban geography, but also to the glory of God and of the denomination involved. In this respect, church extension contributed to what Yeo has described as an atmosphere of 'federal competition' between the churches.³⁴ Nowhere is this clearer than in the expansion into Westoe Rd. which characterised the late 1870s and 1880s. The expenditure of £2,000 on the New Glebe Primitive Methodist chapel of 1890 was justified not only in terms of the need to transfer to this area of new development, but also because, in the words of Mrs. John Robinson, a lifelong Primitive Methodist and a class leader of twelve years standing:

something needed to be done in the town with regard to Primitive Methodism and something has been done³⁵

Central to this friendly rivalry was a determination not be outdone by other denominations in the splendour of buildings. St. John's Presbyterian church of 1877, for example, cost over £5,000 and had an imposing early Gothic front and tower.³⁶ St. Michael's church, Westoe, built at a cost of £3,460 in 1882 had two

³⁴ Yeo Religion and Voluntary Organisations p.75.

³⁵ Gazette 13/3/90, 8/9/90.

³⁶ Hodgson South Shields p.266.

further aisles added in 1895 at a further cost of £2,200. Five years later, the south side of the church was further extended with the building of two vestries. The decision to finance this project - rather than the building of a church hall - was very much that of the parishioners, whose pride in their church is evident from the Rev. Mr. Adamson's 1900 newsletter:

The general feeling had seemed to me to lean towards the building of a hall for Sunday school and other purposes, but the meeting [of parishioners] finally decided that the balance...should go towards the completion of the south side of the church, including vestries...The plan prepared some years ago shows vestries such as no other church in the town possesses except for the new room at St. Hilda's...Within my opinion the Hall would have been much more useful, but I am not sorry as a matter of sentiment that the completion of the church should be proceeding.³⁷

The frequency of organ installations - generously supported by Andrew Carnegie in the first decade of the twentieth century - further shows the spirit of federal competition amongst the churches, as, indeed does the installation of electric lighting during the same period, though here, of course, practicalities went hand in hand with denominational pride.³⁸ For the Roman Catholic church, the stigma of exclusion underlined the need for buildings which would convey the self worth of the congregation. In 1876 the Catholics moved from the aesthetically unremarkable Cuthbert St. church, described by Fr. Markland in 1868 as 'a building of no style of architecture, it was formerly a Methodist Chapel' - to Westoe Lane. Significantly, the move was made 'in deference to a

³⁷ Gazette 8/5/95; Newsletter of May 1900 enclosed in Scrapbook 14/6

³⁸ See Appendix C for details.

strong expression of feeling on the part of the people.³⁹ Even when congregations were obliged to make use of temporary buildings, there was still a place for pride in appearance. The Westoe Wesleyan church of 1905 was a corrugated iron expedient; nevertheless, with its interior of pitched pine and its 'tree lined' winding approach path it looked more like a 'charming country church' than a temporary building.⁴⁰

It is, of course, possible to dismiss all of this activity as costly triumphalism, as evidence of churches obsessed with the glories of this world, rather than working for the next. Yet even leaving aside the obvious practical point that the churches needed to provide space for growing and shifting populations, it is possible to mount a defence of the church building which was a feature of this period. Clearly earthly and spiritual motives were intertwined in church provision. For Dissenters in general, splendid buildings could help to refute charges such as those levelled by 'National Churchman' in the Gazette of 1890. Towns, he argued, were now marred by conventicles each of which was:

like an engine house, [where] every Sunday retired grocers or used up cobblers air their crude notion of theology.⁴¹

Where congregations like the Roman Catholics were even more ostracised from the mainstream, elaborate buildings further underlined self worth. Yet there was also a desire to provide buildings which would bear witness to the glory of God and which would take worshippers out of the humdrum lives which surrounded

³⁹ Visitation Return St. Bede's 1868; Newcastle Diocesan Council of Administration, Minute Book no. 1 p.28.

⁴⁰ Gazette 18/9/05.

⁴¹ *ibid.* 2/5/90.

them in the growing town. To do this, however, the churches were often obliged to relocate themselves in more prosperous suburban areas, a process potentially socially exclusive in its effects.

In a controversial correspondence carried by the Gazette in 1890 the Protestant nonconformists of South Shields were explicitly charged with deserting the 'masses' of the old town for the affluent 'classes' of Westoe. 'Anglican' asked:

If Nonconformists are gathering in 'masses', how is it that so many of their various congregations have removed from their low localities, and built new chapels amongst the 'classes' ? Is it true that the Glebe Methodists removed from the vicinity of Barrington St. because they couldn't get the poor people to attend, and the 'classes' were too proud to go into such slums, consequently the place wouldn't pay ?⁴²

There was some truth in 'Anglican's' charges. Chadwick has argued that, in Bradford, the most imposing nonconformist churches were to be found in the wealthiest wards of the city where congregations were sufficiently prosperous to finance large chapels. Cox further argues that most nonconformist churches - unlike the Anglicans - felt 'no general social obligation...to engage in philanthropy or social reform simply in order to improve the social conditions of those around them' and consequently were able to leave poorer areas with a clear conscience.⁴³ These factors help to explain why both main Methodist denominations in South Shields were obliged to give up chapels in the Waterloo Vale area during this period. The former Presbyterian chapel in Heugh St., which

⁴² Gazette 26/4/90.

⁴³ Chadwick Churches in Bradford chapter 2; Cox J. The English Churches in a Secular Society (New York, 1982) p.54.

the Primitive Methodists had purchased and rebuilt in 1873, faced a debt of £600 in 1890 which was difficult to clear as the church was:

situated in a neighbourhood in which the majority of the people are not very well to do

By 1901 the chapel had been given up.⁴⁴ The Wesleyans were also obliged to give up their chapel in nearby Wellington St. and move to Baring St. since:

The dense population that at one time occupied the low streets and adjacent property having nearly all removed, and there being so many good churches and chapels in the town, there is now no getting a congregation.⁴⁵

Yet to suggest that late Victorian Christians were guilty of deserting the needy poor would be unfair. Contemporary defences pointed out that rigid segregation of the town into rich and poor districts could be false. Replying to 'Anglican's' 1890 attack, 'Dissent' asked:

Are these people in Percy St. (in front of the Baptists' doors) the 'classes' ? Are the people round about St. Paul's, from Victoria Rd. to Derby Terrace, the 'classes' ? Are the people at the back of the Glebe the 'classes' ? [These churches] are in and among the 'masses' of the poorest kind.

There is a whiff of desperation in Dissent's argument and Anglican was quick to point out that Waterloo Vale and the surrounding area, deserted by the Methodists 'swarmed with people of the very lowest class.'⁴⁶ Nevertheless the point that the poor did not live in entirely self contained communities is a fair one. Communities could also change over time. The Wesleyan chapel in Chapter

⁴⁴ Gazette 28/5/90; South Shields PMC Sunday School Returns 1875 - 1914

⁴⁵ Gazette 24/9/90.

⁴⁶ ibid. 1/5/90; 3/5/90.

Row, for example, was erected in 1808 in what was 'at that time one of the most respectable and desirable localities in which to build a chapel'⁴⁷; by 1870 it was in the middle of the very lowest classes in Waterloo Vale. The fact that it remained the centre of the Wesleyan circuit - and indeed was extensively renovated at a cost of £900 in 1890 - shows that chapels could survive in the poorer areas. The Primitive Methodists, the Presbyterians and the Baptists all maintained chapels in Laygate Lane during this period. Salvation Army citadels were to be found on Johnson's Hill and in Cuthbert St. in the Waterloo Vale area; the new citadel of 1911 remained in the unfashionable area of Havelock St. The Gospel Temperance Union was established in Wallis St., just off Waterloo Vale, where, according to 'Dissent' it was:

giving greater attractions to the people than the old places of worship in the district did - and what the Glebe have lost the Gospel Temperance Union have gained⁴⁸

The support which the union received from nonconformist ministers of all denominations would suggest that this was a further way of maintaining contact with the 'masses'.

For the Anglican church one of the benefits of establishment was that it could maintain its work without relying solely on local voluntary finance. This meant that Anglican parishes, like St. Mark's, could be created in poorer areas. In the event, the circumstances of the Rev. David Evans' ministry were such that a

⁴⁷ Gazette 24/9/90.

⁴⁸ ibid. 1/5/90.

fair assessment of the parish's history is difficult⁴⁹, though the Rev. Mr. Woods' 1912 comment that:

this is, of course, a very abnormal parish. Poverty and shabbiness, as well as indifference, are great obstacles

might suggest that the church was never fully integrated into the local community and was, in Yeo's terminology, 'for' rather than 'of' the people.⁵⁰ Yet if St. Mark's might be seen as a 'White Elephant', Holy Trinity, where the outward movement of population had begun as early as 1886, had a working class congregation 'decidedly marked by brotherly fellowship' and could put forward 79 confirmation candidates in 1897. Significantly Mr. Holmes reported in 1908 that 'Social work in our parish is now left entirely to the Church of England.'⁵¹ Anglican missions, such as St. Hilda's in Waterloo Vale (housed in the Young Men's Institute of 1876) provided a place of worship for those poorer inhabitants of the parish 'who did not wish to be seen in church' and who - it is widely held - were allowed access only to the gallery of St. Hilda's church itself.⁵² Missions, especially those in rented rooms, provided a cheap and flexible response to shifts in patterns of population and allowed the Church to experiment with alternative liturgies, often carried out by lay preachers. For the Rev. Arthur McCullagh, reporting from St. Stephen's in 1896, missions did not feed the church; they nevertheless:

⁴⁹ See below pp.117-123.

⁵⁰ Visitation Return St. Mark's 1912; Yeo Religion and Voluntary Organisations p.130.

⁵¹ Visitation Returns Holy Trinity 1882, 1900, 1908; Holmes Rev. R.E. A Tyneside Parish (South Shields, 1911); Durham Diocesan Calendar passim.

⁵² Gazette 3/3/1960 and oral evidence of Thomas Logan, St. Hilda's Churchwarden (1983) quoted in Ward C. B. 'The Alienation of the Working Classes from the Church of England in the Twentieth Century', unpublished thesis for the Lambeth Diploma (1983) pp.167-8.

seem to be valued as affording an opportunity for worship to those who are ill-clad and shabby in appearance and who from a kind of shy pride shrink from worshipping with the better dressed members of an ordinary Sunday congregation.⁵³

Ideally such people might constitute the basis for a new parish; St. Mary's, St. Mark's, St. Simon's, St. Jude's and St. Oswin's were all formed from missions. Missions also enabled the Established church to maintain a presence in the most deprived areas of the town - St. Hilda's in Waterloo Vale, Holy Trinity in the Holborn district with missions in Windmill Hill and Nelson's Bank, St. Stephen's in Wapping St. - adjoining Heugh St. which the Primitive Methodists had been obliged to leave - and St. Mark's in Wilson St. Nor were missions confined to the Anglican church. The Presbyterians had missions in Pan Bank (Holborn), Mill St. (Waterloo Vale) and Brunswick St. (on the Green's Estate), whilst the Zion New Connexion Methodists maintained a mission in the docks area at Wapping St. Indeed, the collapse of the Town and River Mission in 1890 was attributed, in part to the 'number of missions connected with the denominations' which had made the interdenominational venture of 1858 redundant.⁵⁴ None of this is to deny that the main priorities in provision went elsewhere, nor that the mission system was socially divisive. It did, however, mean that the churches of the period were not entirely divorced from the 'masses'.

If connections with the masses were not severed, did the changing urban geography of the period jeopardise the churches' hold over the middle classes ? Brown certainly regards the process of 'suburbanisation' as a greater threat to the

⁵³ Visitation Return St. Stephen's 1896; Chadwick Churches in Bradford chapter 6.

⁵⁴ Gazette 3/5/90.



churches than the original growth of the cities. The social fracturing of cities into class based districts meant that the churches lost their role as 'cross class definers of social respectability'.⁵⁵ Other historians have detected a diminishing concern for religion in the new middle class suburbs. McLeod sees a 'crisis of faith' amongst the middle classes in the late Victorian period, partly caused by the effects of developments in science and biblical scholarship and partly by a reaction against evangelical ideas. This crisis manifested itself in the increasing reluctance of the middle classes to provide resources of manpower and money for the churches.⁵⁶ Morris points to similar developments in Croydon, where the middle class energies and resources were increasingly devoted to secular politics, rather than the churches.⁵⁷ It is, perhaps, significant that Morris' research is based on an affluent suburb of London; in South Shields the problem seems less acute as there were fewer recognisably 'middle class' suburbs. Anglican visitation returns suggest that lay help was forthcoming in most parishes. At St. Hilda's - which, as parish church, attracted a significant number of wealthy supporters - lay help was said to be 'very vigorous' in 1908, with men from the church visiting the slum areas of the parish. At St. Oswin's, lay help was also 'very vigorous' and the Reverend Arthur Bowcock happily concluded 'my lay people will do anything they can, I could never wish for better.'⁵⁸ Only at St. Michael's did the incumbent complain that his parishioners were less willing to work with the clergy as they were motivated only by the 'desire for ease and pleasure' and were influenced by the 'wild agnosticism' evident in the parish which 'prevents religion from being

⁵⁵ Brown C.G. *The Mechanisms of Religious Growth in Urban Societies: British Cities Since the Eighteenth Century* in McLeod H. (ed.) *European Religion in the Age of the Great Cities* (London, 1995) p.256.

⁵⁶ McLeod H. *Religion and Society in England 1850-1914* (London, 1996) pp.179-196.

⁵⁷ Morris J.N. *Religion and Urban Change (Croydon 1840-1914)* (Woodbridge, 1992) pp.175-185.

⁵⁸ *Visitation Returns* St. Hilda; St. Oswin 1908.

regarded as a serious matter.⁵⁹ Since this was arguably the most gentrified of the borough's parishes, the evidence supports Morris' findings, though the social composition of South Shields means that the overall impact on the churches of this declining interest may have been less than in Croydon.

The Deerness Valley and Teesdale.

Perhaps the most obvious difference between church provision in South Shields and in the rural areas of the study lies in the range of activities available. A larger population sustained a diversity of religious practice not practical outside the urban centres. In the Deerness Valley there were neither Congregational nor Presbyterian churches, the absence of the latter denomination perhaps indicating limited Scottish immigration into the villages, nor were the Unitarians - capable of sustaining only one congregation in Shields - represented in the valley. Economic factors are also significant. Whilst the Salvation Army did appear in the villages (in 1896 the Waterhouses Primitive Methodists resolved not to allow them use of their premises for any future suppers or teas; five months later the village Wesleyans agreed to loan them their chapel⁶⁰) they were scarcely significant - Moore states that they did not appear in the valley until the 1920s. No doubt this limited presence may be linked to the buoyant state of the coal trade which meant that the submerged tenth was not present in the valley. Similar factors may help to explain the absence of any organisation akin to the Gospel Temperance Union of South Shields. Yet amongst those denominations

⁵⁹ Visitation Return St. Michael's 1908.

⁶⁰ Bourne Primitive Methodist Society. Waterhouses' Trustees' Minute Book 28/10/96; Russell St. Wesleyan Society. Waterhouses Trustees' Minute Book 30/3/97.

which were active, there was significant provision of church buildings. Only the Baptists were limited to one congregation in the valley - at Waterhouses/Esh Winning - but they were capable of building a large chapel in Durham Rd. in 1901. The Roman Catholic mission at Newhouse did serve the whole of the valley from its revival in 1869 until the establishment of a new mission at Ushaw Moor in 1909. Like the Baptists, the Roman Catholics were also able to carry out extensive rebuildings in 1883. The Anglican Church was quicker to respond to the needs of the newer mining communities than it had been in earlier years; indeed, for Emery, the Established Church was 'one of the earliest religious groups to be active in the new villages.'⁶¹ Parish churches were erected at Waterhouses (St. Paul's) in 1869 and Hamsteels/Quebec (St. John's school chapel) in 1875. Esh and Ushaw Moor were served by mission buildings from Esh village - St. Stephen's (1874) and St. Luke's (1882) respectively. By 1913 St. Luke's had its own brick built church to replace the earlier iron chapel. The key religious group in the valley, though, was clearly the Methodists. New Connexion Methodists were strong in Cornsay and established a chapel in Hamilton Row in 1883. The Wesleyans built at Waterhouses in 1872, Esh Winning in 1886, East Hedleyhope - an iron chapel - in 1893 and Ushaw Moor in 1900. Primitive Methodists also built at Waterhouses in 1872, Quebec (1876), Hedley Hill (1879) and Esh Winning, where a new church was opened in 1899. Lymington Terrace was an iron church missioned from Waterhouses from 1897 onwards. A Primitive Methodist iron chapel was erected in East Hedleyhope in 1907. Societies at Malton Colliery and Cornsay Colliery also existed during this period.

⁶¹ Emery N. The Deerness Valley: History of Development in a Durham Valley (Durham University Department of Archaeology, Occasional Paper no. 9, Durham, 1989) p.177.

In upper Teesdale, provision was even more limited. Only the Anglicans, Wesleyans and Primitive Methodists and Baptists had formal congregations in the area. In contrast to the Deerness Valley, the Church of England in upper Teesdale inherited a tradition of neglect. The Rev. John Henry Brown was the first resident vicar of St. Mary's, Middleton for many years, serving from 1829 to 1874. Whilst locally 'known for his thoughtfulness and kindness'⁶², he had done little to improve his church to meet contemporary needs; rather he had, according to the Rev. Mr. Low's 1875 address to the local Archaeological Society:

watched over every stone in the church. He...would never hear of the least alteration⁶³

As a consequence, by 1874:

the smallness of the church and its intense ugliness [were] a serious bar to the extension of church feeling in the parish

Indeed, even the Rev. Mr. Low reported that the church's 'internal condition [was] deplorable in the extreme' with a 'most hideous, uncomfortable and unwholesome gallery.'⁶⁴ The death of the Rev. Mr. Brown made possible the demolition of the old building and the erection of a new church in 1879, capable of sitting 400 people, at a cost of £6,000. Ten years earlier a new church had been built at Eggleston. Considerably cheaper at £1,700, Holy Trinity provided sittings for 220 and replaced an earlier chapel of ease. The church of St. James the Less at Forest in Teesdale had been built in 1845 at the expense of the Duke

⁶² Tallentire W.L. Middleton-in-Teesdale (Middleton-in-Teesdale, n.d.) p.19.

⁶³ Mercury 2/6/75.

⁶⁴ Mercury 2/6/75; Visitation Return St. Mary's, Middleton 1874.

of Cleveland, by 1890 it too had become the centre of a separate parish which was responsible for St. Jude's chapel at Harwood - the most remote Anglican chapel in the Durham diocese. The strength of Methodist dissent in upper Teesdale had clearly stimulated Anglican efforts during this period. Both Wesleyans and Primitives had circuits based at Middleton and both were well established in the area. Wesley himself had preached at Newbiggin in a meeting house purchased by the local society in 1759 for £60 and which was to become the second oldest Methodist chapel in continuous use.⁶⁵ There were renovations of the building in 1882 and 1904. In Middleton the chapel was entirely rebuilt in 1871 at a cost of £1,704. Further renovations followed and a new Sunday school building was added as late as 1906. Extensions were also carried out to the Wesleyan chapel in Eggleston in 1881. With a membership of 80 in 1892 the village was clearly a Wesleyan stronghold.⁶⁶ Less significant, but still part of the Teesdale Circuit, were the Wesleyan societies at Forest and Harwood. The predominance of the Wesleyan Connection at Eggleston ensured that the Primitive Methodist presence there was less powerful. In 1912 there were only two members of the connection in the village. Nonetheless, the circuit sanctioned the reopening of the village chapel. Conversely, the Primitives were strong in Forest with 63 members in 1897 and 44 in 1912. The fall was a product of the demise of the village's mining industry, but it did not prevent the enlargement of the Ebenezer Chapel of 1881 in 1912.⁶⁷ Primitive Methodist chapels were also to

⁶⁵ The Teesdale Methodist No. 3 April 1949.

⁶⁶ Middleton Wesleyan Society Accounts of chapel Building 1869-72 ; Middleton Wesleyan Society Souvenir Brochure (1970); Newbiggin Wesleyan Society Building and General Committee Minute Book 21/10/82; TWC Minute Book 17/6/81; 4/3/92.

⁶⁷ Middleton PMC Statistical Returns passim. and Minute Book 2/3/12; 7/12/12.

be found in Eggleston, Harwood, Newbiggin and Middleton where, like the Wesleyans, the Primitive Methodists built a new chapel in the 1870s. The Baptists of the upper dale were likewise based in Middleton, where their chapel enjoyed the significant patronage of the Stagg family.⁶⁸ There were also Baptist places of worship in Eggleston and Forest.

Some of the forces which stimulated church building in South Shields did not exist in the other communities examined. Shifting settlement patterns associated with the drift away from residential property in the city centre were not replicated in the villages. Nevertheless denominations were keen to extend provision to as many areas of settlement as possible. This seems to have been particularly true of Methodism, the most significant religious group in both of the rural communities studied. Wesleyan provision in Forest and the reopening of the Primitive chapel in Eggleston both point to a spirit of 'federal competition' not restrained by practicalities such as the number of potential worshippers. Only the 1910 union of the Primitive and Wesleyan efforts in Harwood suggests that the Methodists of upper Teesdale were beginning to respond to the changing demographic patterns of the valley and to trim their aspirations in the face of reality.⁶⁹ In the Deerness Valley, on the other hand, both connections erected iron chapels in the small settlement of East Hedleyhope. The Primitive Methodists, indeed, built as late as 1907 - fourteen years after the Wesleyans - but their mutual competition meant that the Primitive chapel, designed to accommodate 150, never attracted more than 50 hearers. By 1932 - when

⁶⁸ See above p.75.

⁶⁹ TWC Minute Book 17/12/10; Middleton PMC Minute Book 1/3/13.

external rationalisation forced its closure - it had become 'an iron building much out of repair'⁷⁰; a veritable rural white elephant. Nevertheless, its erection in 1907 suggests that rural Christians were as buoyant about the future as were their urban counterparts. Only the external factor of demographic decline seems to have dimmed this confidence.

Similarly positive thinking was evident in the renovations made to buildings during this period. In Teesdale, a combination of population growth early in the period coupled with the shortcomings of older buildings of long established congregations made changes likely. The added factor of denominational rivalry helps to explain the building of Wesleyan and Primitive chapels and a new Anglican church in Middleton in the 1870s. In the Deerness Valley, buildings were newer and less in need of extensive renovation, but changes were, nevertheless, carried out. In Waterhouses alone, the Anglicans carried out significant internal work in 1883 and installed an organ in 1910; the Primitive Methodists installed a new heating system in 1890, a platform for singers in 1898, electric light in 1901 and a communion rail a year later. The Wesleyans built their own platform in chapel and extended the vestry in 1890, installed a new heating system in 1899, erected a further platform for Sunday scholars in 1904, laid linoleum and put up a communion table in 1905 and installed electric lighting in 1906.⁷¹ Such work was driven by changing liturgical practice in the Methodist churches as well as practical matters such as lighting and heating.

⁷⁰ Waterhouses PMC Returns.

⁷¹ Visitation returns St. Paul's, Waterhouses passim.; Waterhouses, Bourne Primitive Methodist Chapel Minute Book passim.; Waterhouses Russell St. Wesleyan Chapel Minute Book passim.

Denominational rivalry is also evident. In March 1897 the Primitive Methodists of Waterhouses first discussed the possibility of buying a new organ. The village Wesleyans followed one month later and, eventually, stole a march on the Primitives, installing their organ in April 1898, six months earlier than their neighbours.⁷² All this work suggests congregations were confident about their place in the villages and keen to create chapels to the Glory of God. The parallel with South Shields is a direct one.

As in the towns, provision incurred costs. Rural communities had some advantages here. Building appears to have been less expensive in rural communities thanks to lower land costs and to the provision of free or cheap labour by villagers. Clearly direct comparison is difficult as prices varied over time and chapel buildings themselves took different forms. Nevertheless the Primitive Methodists of Esh Winning were able to build a new chapel in 1899 at a cost of £1,040. Four years later the same denomination spent £4,800 on the Baring St. chapel in South Shields. The Primitive Methodist chapel in Waterhouses was built for only £425 in 1873 and two years earlier the Wesleyans of Middleton had built a far more substantial chapel to sit 700 at a total cost of £1,704, only just over £100 more than the South Shields Primitive Methodists had spent on the Glebe chapel - of a similar size - as far back as 1823. Nor had the Middleton society invested in a glorified 'engine house' - rather, as the Rev. Peter Mackenzie told members at the chapel opening:

⁷²Waterhouses, Bourne Primitive Methodist Chapel Minute Book 23/3/97; Waterhouses Russell St. Wesleyan Chapel Minute Book 21/1/98.

they had a sacred chapel that any man, however high the position he occupied, might appear in without lowering his dignity⁷³

Some rural communities also benefited from direct patronage not always available in the towns. Love's influence at Cornsay Colliery and the support of the Stagg connection for the Baptists of Middleton has already been noted. Perhaps the most direct help was provided by the Duke of Cleveland to the Anglicans of Forest, where the church and Glebe house were built at the Duke's expense. He also provided the minister's stipend, making the parish unique amongst those studied as the creation of a landowner for his estate.⁷⁴

Alongside these financial advantages, however, rural churches also faced the difficulty that sources of finance were more limited than in the towns. Whilst patronage from wealthy individuals was invaluable, it only served to compensate for the absence of the middle classes which sustained some of the urban churches. Of the 190 subscribers to the Middleton's new Wesleyan chapel fund of 1871, for example, 127 made donations of less than one pound.⁷⁵ Voluntary means of raising finance were also more limited in scope. Bazaars were less likely to produce significant sums than in larger urban areas and opportunities to mount profit making entertainments were likewise more limited. Even in Middleton, with its relatively large population, the Wesleyans raised only £142 from their 1911 bazaar in aid of the new Sunday schools.⁷⁶ In the Deerness Valley, a bazaar

⁷³ Mercury 22/11/71.

⁷⁴ Mercury 2/6/75.

⁷⁵ Middleton Wesleyan Society: Accounts of Chapel Building 1869-72.

⁷⁶ Middleton Wesleyan Society: Accounts of Bazaar held November 1911.

held to finance renovations at St. John's, Hamsteels in 1890 brought many of the ancillary benefits discussed in relation to South Shields. As the Mayor of Durham explained at the opening of the event it gave:

pleasure to both old and young in preparing for such sales and...awakened...interest in everyone desirous of lending a helping hand to any good work, whether of the particular denomination for which a bazaar was to be held or not

However, the £34: 16: 2 raised by the sale was, by urban standards, modest.⁷⁷ Facing such limited funds, debt was perhaps more of a problem for rural churches than for their urban counterparts. Certainly they were keen to see debts paid off. A general memorandum of 1872 in the Middleton chapel building account proudly declares the only remaining liabilities on the building to be a £50 loan from the Wesleyan Chapel Building Committee and £500 borrowed on interest.⁷⁸ At Forest, the Primitives were praised for their work on building the Ebenezer Chapel, where - thanks to gifts of money and - significantly - work:

they have a beautiful chapel, free from debt, of which they may well be proud, for the building is an ornament to the dale, and all the result of voluntarianism - the free will offering of the people.⁷⁹

In this last comment lies, perhaps, the greatest similarity between rural and urban church provision. In the villages as in the towns the churches sought to build to the glory of God and to the credit of their denomination. Only changing demographic circumstances in Teesdale caused a change from this pattern.

⁷⁷ Chronicle 4/7/90.

⁷⁸ Middleton Wesleyan Society: Accounts of Chapel Building 1869-72: General Memorandum 23/9/72.

⁷⁹ Mercury 28/4/86.

The Provision of Manpower.

Bricks and mortar alone were not sufficient to guarantee the health of the churches; all denominations recognised the need for skilled staff to carry out the Lord's work. Whilst even the Anglican church came to recognise the need for lay ministry during this period, the professional clergyman remained a key figure in most churches. This short section attempts to assess the impact of the clergy on the work of their churches. It does so by means of several case studies.

Canon Henry Edwin Savage was vicar of St. Hilda's, South Shields, 1891-1904 and from 1893 was Rural Dean of Jarrow. Born in 1854, he was educated at Haileybury and Christ's College, Cambridge, where he was fourth Classic in 1877. Here he first met Lightfoot whom he was to follow to Durham as 'domestic chaplain' at Auckland Castle in 1879. One of the first of 'Lightfoot's Lambs' he became vicar of Pelton Fell in 1881 and of Christ Church West Hartlepool in 1885. He left South Shields to take up the living of Halifax and in 1909 became Dean of Lichfield. He died in 1939.⁸⁰ His biographer believes Savage:

ranks amongst the most devoted, influential and important of the many distinguished men who have served...the Church in England

and, more particularly, that:

In South Shields he [spent] thirteen immensely active years, possibly his best as a priest.⁸¹

⁸⁰ North Durham Journal 25/9/00; Gazette 11/5/04; Benedikz B.S. Handlist of the Papers of the Very Rev. Henry Edwin Savage D.D. Dean of Lichfield 1909-39, with a Brief Memoir of his Life. (Lichfield, 1977).

⁸¹ Benedikz Handlist p.2.

Contemporaries echoed the plaudits. At the parish farewell to its vicar Herbert Todd described Savage as 'A1 in every department of church work' and when one of his curates left to be Rector of Newbury that town's local press advised its readers that their new incumbent 'has had the advantage of being trained under one of the best vicars in England.'⁸²

What prompted such praise ? The Gazette's 'Captious Critic' described Savage in 1898 as:

a man whose face might well attract attention in the street...his presence in the pulpit is commanding...he has the air of a man with whom it would be unwise to quarrel.⁸³

His scholarship certainly marked him out from many in his parish and formed a central part of his ministry. He lectured the South Shields Church Workers' Union on British History and the History of the Church - praising the learning, art and architecture of the pre Reformation monasteries and criticising the 'mud slinging' of Henry VIII - and organised the Union's annual educational visits.⁸⁴ He gave public lectures, such as those on monastic life given in Gateshead Town Hall in October 1897; three months earlier he had addressed the Newcastle Society of Antiquaries.⁸⁵ His Junior Clergy Missionary Association promoted education and study amongst the younger clergy within the Deanery and Savage himself was active in the promotion of Anglican day schools, not only in his own parish, but also through service on the School Board where he displayed a

⁸² Gazette n.d., and Newbury Weekly 19/9/01 enclosed in Scrapbook 14/7.

⁸³ Gazette 24/10/98.

⁸⁴ Scrapbooks passim.

⁸⁵ Newcastle Journal 12/10/97; Newcastle Chronicle 3/7/97 both included in Scrapbook 14/7.

willingness to fight the Church's cause in local politics.⁸⁶ His churchmanship was of the High style favoured by his predecessors at St. Hilda's. On his arrival in the parish he told church workers of his ideal:

that the worship may grow ever more real and relevant, helped as it is by one of the most beautiful of musical services.⁸⁷

Further examination of Canon Savage's churchmanship follows below; suffice it to say that High Church practices were central to his pastorate. Whilst there are few records of his direct involvement with young people, it is, perhaps, a tribute to his skills as a team leader that his curates were able to carry out this work. The West St. Boys' Club was said to owe everything to the 'conception and organisation and management' of the Rev. Mr. Rolt; the Rev. Mr. Burlingham, likewise, was credited for efficient work with the Church Lads' Brigade.⁸⁸ Canon Savage was himself much closer to the parish's Men's Bible Class 'attended every Sunday by adults of all classes and creeds.'⁸⁹

This appeal to 'all classes' was a defining feature of Savage's ministry, as he explained in Pastoral Visitation:

It is the duty and the right of the parochial clergy, as the authorised spiritual officers of health for the whole district, to visit and to be ready to minister to all.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ See above pp.300-301.

⁸⁷ St. Hilda's Parish Magazine January 1892.

⁸⁸ St. Hilda's Parish Magazine March 1895; press n.d., enclosed in Scrapbook 14/7.

⁸⁹ Gazette 10/5/04.

⁹⁰ Savage H.E. Pastoral Visitation (Newcastle, 1905) p.4.

For the church going population, Savage promoted social events such as the 'At Homes' of 1899 onwards. Their purpose was to unify the congregation and counteract those social divisions described by Savage in his 1900 Visitation Return:

Social distinctions are the harder to overcome when they are not definitely marked. Often when they are almost imperceptible to outsiders they are the most tenaciously guarded by stiff isolation.⁹¹

Bishop Westcott attended the 1901 At Home along with 800 others. He described Savage's initiative as 'a very great attraction to me'. Its demonstration of the power of combined faith would help the church to overcome 'drunkenness, gambling and profligacy' and its celebration of Christian fellowship was important to the Anglican church which 'in this respect...had hitherto fallen behind other communions'.⁹²

For Savage, however, the calling of the priesthood extended beyond those who attended church. The priest's duty was to visit and - so far as possible - to know all the people of his parish. The parochial system, Savage believed, offered the clergy of the Established Church opportunities not available to Nonconformist clergy who were constrained to minister only to those who attended their places of worship. Anglican clergy, on the other hand, were assured of a welcome springing jointly from deference and the genuine concern of the caring clergyman:

Even in the roughest slums of the large towns the clergy who are known to people through their constant care of the children, or of

⁹¹ Visitation Return St. Hilda's 1900.

⁹² Bishop Westcott to Savage 13/12/00 enclosed in Scrapbook 14/7; Gazette 10/1/01

the boys and young men, and who are familiar visitors on their account, are assured of ready recognition. They are safe from misunderstanding and insult, and they receive a welcome that is accorded to no-one else.⁹³

House to house visiting was central to Savage's vision of parochial life. Its purpose was not 'some selfish aim of securing large congregations at the church services', but rather an attempt to understand the needs of all parishioners. Savage based his own perceptive views of urban life on evidence from such visits:

All those who live under exactly similar outward conditions usually belong to one and the same class, and the general characteristics of that class will be met with in most of the houses. But nothing could be more untrue, or indeed more unjust, than to imagine that men and women are themselves as monotonous as the unlovely houses they find themselves compelled to live in...in reality the similar outward conditions only serve to mask the endlessly dissimilar characters within.⁹⁴

Significantly, when Canon Savage left South Shields the Gazette's 'Local Gossip' column reported that he had 'got into the hearts of the poorer of his flock by whom he will be sorely missed'.⁹⁵

Canon Savage, in his spirituality, education and concern for his flock, represents something of an exemplar of Anglican ministry during this period. Unfortunately, South Shields also furnishes an example of the serious shortcomings of the Established Church in the Rev. David Evans. Born in Llandiloes, Mr. Evans was educated at Hatfield Hall, Durham, where he graduated with a first class degree in Theology. He was ordained Deacon in 1868

⁹³ Savage Pastoral Visitation p.52.

⁹⁴ *ibid.* p.6; pp.57-8.

⁹⁵ Gazette 11/5/04.

and priest in 1869. From 1868 to 1873 he was a curate of Holy Trinity church and became the first vicar of St. Mark's parish at its formation in 1873. St. Mark's was part of the Anglican strategy to meet the needs of the new urban centres, as the Gazette explained in 1875:

Planted in a location where the population consists almost entirely of labouring people, it has been reared among difficulties the formidable nature of which will easily be comprehended by any-one who chooses to give the matter a passing thought.⁹⁶

The appointment of the Rev. David Evans simply exacerbated these problems. A critique of his ministry focuses on three main aspects.

First, his financial management. Evans was declared bankrupt as early as 1885; five years later he was sued for £5:5:6 owing on his wife's burial account. Such cases did little for the image of the Church - an anonymous correspondent informed the Archdeacon that the Vicar was widely known in the town as 'the Reverend David Coffin'.⁹⁷ Mr. Evans also failed to pay his staff. His curates' annual income of £130 was made up of grants from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and £10 from the vicar's living of £330 p.a.⁹⁸ In 1885 Evans's two curates were sufficiently concerned about the integrity of their priest to request that the Commissioners pay their stipends direct to them, rather than to their vicar.⁹⁹ Teachers at St. Mark's day schools were also owed money by Mr. Evans - Archibald Robertson accused him of 'false pretence and fraud' whilst Mr. Gilland threatened to send Evans to Durham gaol unless his daughter was paid

⁹⁶ Gazette 27/5/75.

⁹⁷ Gazette 17/7/85; 14/8/90; 'A Churchman' to Archdeacon Watkin 8/1/92 Auckland 84.

⁹⁸ Visitation Return St. Mark's 1882.

⁹⁹ J.A. Bottomley and J.E.G. Condell to Ecclesiastical Commissioners 11/4/85 Auckland 84.

the salaries she was owed.¹⁰⁰ Certainly Mr. Evans's practice of absorbing the school grant into a parish account which ran jointly with his personal account added to the air of financial malpractice surrounding the administration of the schools and prompted the Department of Education to insist in 1891 that the grant would no longer be paid until Evans was replaced as treasurer by 'a man of repute, who was not connected with him in any way'.¹⁰¹ This lack of trust in Mr. Evans' financial management was further fed by his regular appeals for charity for his parish. These were circulated across the country and met with some frosty responses - a Cambridge correspondent, for example, wrote to the Bishop to complain of Mr. Evans' 'effusive impudence'.¹⁰² Nevertheless, the appeals did produce money for the general parish account - indeed, the parish auditor informed the Bishop as early as 1879 that income from appeals exceeded the amount spent on the schools. In the light of such evidence, the Bishop did secure an 1886 promise from Mr. Evans 'to have no more circulars ("begging") printed or lithographed'; in 1889, however, an appeal for £1,850 was launched.¹⁰³ In short, Mr. Evans's financial dealings mark him as a man unlikely to inspire trust.

The second aspect of Mr. Evans's malpractice concerned his fondness for alcoholic drink. It was alleged in a Durham Consistory Court hearing in May 1896 that he was often to be seen wandering the streets of the town in a drunken state. In 1891 he had been seen in a dishevelled state in a brickyard at 4 a.m.,

¹⁰⁰ A. Robertson to Bishop of Durham 21/3/84; J. Gilland to Bishop 3/4/84 Auckland 84.

¹⁰¹ G.G. Kckewich to Bishop of Durham 14/3/91 Auckland 84.

¹⁰² Letter to Bishop [sender's name illegible] 19/10/86 Auckland 84.

¹⁰³ H. Hilton to Bishop 16/7/79; D. Evans to Bishop 17/12/86 Auckland 84.

looking 'as if he had been sleeping in the firehole'; in 1896 P.C. Glendenning had seen a drunken Evans in Deans Lane with a girl on each arm. A former day servant in the vicarage stated that she was sent out by the vicar to buy alcohol - four pints of beer, three gills and 1/- worth of whiskey daily. A Mr. Patterson, who described himself as a respectable fisherman, stated that Mr. Evans had arrived drunk at his house to deliver charity money to his wife, so drunk that his hat fell off his head when he walked through the door. A former churchwarden testified that small boys in the street were in the habit of calling out 'look at little Davy Evans' as the drunken vicar passed them by. Evans' defence - that such familiarity was evidence that he got on well with young people whom he took on trips - does not seem to have cut much ice in the court, which found him guilty of all the four charges relating to drunkenness and intoxication.¹⁰⁴

The third aspect of Mr. Evans's misconduct was sexual. Two women were cited in the course of the trial. The first was Annie Jacks, described as 'not a woman of good character'. Mr. Evans had frequently met her at the house of his former servant, Mrs. Cook who stated that she had found Evans and Jacks in bed together in July 1891, and had thrown the girl out of the house by her hair. She also reported seeing Evans give the girl a half sovereign. Evans's attempt to blacken the character of Mrs. Cook, portraying her as a bitter former servant, was ignored by the court which believed her testimony and found the vicar of St. Mark's guilty of immoral acts with Jacks.¹⁰⁵ Evans was also found guilty of immoral conduct with his housekeeper, Mary Jane Douglass, between April 1891

¹⁰⁴ Gazette 30/5/96.

¹⁰⁵ Gazette 30/5/96.

and December 1895, when the two were married. Evans claimed that the first child born to Mary Douglass at the vicarage, in August 1891, was illegitimate. Yet servants testified that all the children referred to Evans as Papa and the prosecution - apparently in a piece of perfect courtroom drama - produced the birth certificate of Mary Jane Douglass's twins, which gave Evans's name as the father.¹⁰⁶ He was deprived of the Living of St. Mark's in August 1896 and deposed as a priest in May 1897.

Mr. Evans's career serves to highlight Williams's view that the fortunes of an Anglican parish were often linked to the incumbent's:

success or failure in upholding a definition of goodness, morality and holiness which both included and extended beyond social criteria¹⁰⁷

Evans's manifest failure to provide such a role model cost his church dear. There were no confirmations at St. Mark's for the 10 years before his removal and the congregation had dwindled dramatically. At the court hearing of 1896, Mr. Strachan suggested that the average attendance of 4-500 in 1878 had fallen to 10 or 20 at the outside - a situation doubtless exacerbated by the cutting off of gas supplies to the church due to bad debts in 1890.¹⁰⁸ Even Evans admitted that 'his congregation had dwindled somewhat owing to his financial difficulties'.¹⁰⁹ Witnesses at the trial also spoke of parish work left undone; John Gilland reported that 'a parish that should be divided is left to the Salvation Army' (a fact

¹⁰⁶ *ibid* 30/5/96; 31/5/96.

¹⁰⁷ Williams S. *Urban Popular Religion and the Rites of Passage* in McLeod H. (ed.) *European Religion* p.229.

¹⁰⁸ *Gazette* 30/5/96. Anonymous note to Bishop of Durham 24/8/90 *Auckland* 84.

¹⁰⁹ *Gazette* 1/8/96.

accepted by Evans in his 1892 visitation return) and blamed the vicar directly for this:

The question is often asked how to get the working men to go to church I say by showing them a good example if you ask them to go to church they will tell you to look at your vicar¹¹⁰

So much, indeed, did the parish suffer in the later years of Evans's ministry that major work was needed after his departure, not only in the renovation of buildings, but also in the building up of parish activities neglected for almost twenty years. The Wilson St. Mission was built, the Princes St. Working Men's Club was opened and three clergy and a mission lady were employed.¹¹¹ Nor was the damage caused by the Evans scandal confined to St. Mark's. The Shields Gazette spoke in its editorial of May 31st. 1896 of a scandal:

which in its various ramifications cannot fail to have brought the name of religion into unmerited contempt...a case almost unprecedented in its depravity...it has proved no small hindrance to the work of the Established Church in the district.¹¹²

Why had the Established Church allowed its name to be besmirched in this way ? In part because the situation at St. Mark's had deteriorated over time. If congregations of 4-500 were common in 1878, it is only fair to state that Evans was vicar then too. He seems to have been supported by an active evangelical lay body in the early years. A letter published in the Shields Gazette in November 1893 cited St. Mark's as one of the town's churches built by low churchmen but argued that it was now impossible for the evangelicals to worship there 'with

¹¹⁰ J. Gilland to Bishop of Durham 1890 Auckland 84; Visitation return St. Mark's 1892.

¹¹¹ Poster 8/2/99 included in Scrapbook 14/6

¹¹² Gazette 31/5/96.

what they consider the simple purity of the English liturgy'.¹¹³ Perhaps with time Evans had lost significant lay support; he himself suggested that both his 1885 bankruptcy and the death of his first wife, six years later, contributed significantly to his later problems. If what began as a successful ministry later went sour the authorities' hand may have been stayed for a while. It also seems possible that the fear of a scandal acted as a brake on discipline, although the evidence suggests that Evans's conduct was so outrageous that earlier action against him could only have served to improve the Church's reputation. Such action might have jeopardised the future of St. Mark's schools - Canon Baily, vicar of St. Hilda's and no friend of Evans, did counsel the Bishop to watch the school situation carefully in November 1890, as the stopping of the grant might lead to the loss of a church school.¹¹⁴ Evans's reputation for litigation may also have prevented earlier action. A letter to the Bishop's clerk with reference to a proposed sequestration in 1885, made this explicit threat:

In your letter to my client of yesterday you introduce the Bishop on to the stage as an accomplice. I may tell you that I am not ever afraid of Bishops, especially even the Bishop of Durham.¹¹⁵

Ultimately, however, it was the passage of the Clergy Discipline Act of 1892 which made it possible for the Bishop finally to bring to justice so awkward an adversary.

If nothing else, the contrasting careers of Henry Savage and David Evans point clearly to the dangers inherent in any generalisation about the role of the

¹¹³ Gazette 27/11/93.

¹¹⁴ Canon Baily to Bishop of Durham 25/11/90 Auckland 84.

¹¹⁵ Evans to Bishop of Durham 3/5/85; H. Ritson to Bishop's clerk 19/11/84 Auckland 84.

professional clergy. They also show the impact a clergyman could have on the life of an Anglican parish. In part, this resulted from the limited lay influence in the government of the church, a point seized on by the Gazette's editorial on the Evans affair:

What will strike the average citizen most forcibly in connection with the whole wretched affair, however, is the difficulty which, in the existing state of things, is experienced in the Established Church in putting an end to a scandal which has so long been an open sore...it is certain that such a state of things could not have continued unchecked in any of the free churches where, untrammelled by the fetters of a state alliance, discipline can be and is so much more readily exercised¹¹⁶

The parishioners of St. Mark's had little recourse to action to remove Evans. Their desperation is evident in an anonymous 1890 letter to the Bishop which states:

I solemnly believe that you are not aware of the state of things at present existing in this church.¹¹⁷

Yet the Established Church was making efforts to include the laity in its work. As early as 1880 Bishop Lightfoot had told his diocesan conference that the Church of England should try to make greater use of the ministry of lay people as:

it is a matter of common observation that Nonconformist communities are for the most part more forward than ourselves to utilise the zeal and energy of their lay members.¹¹⁸

Seventeen years later his successor told a similar gathering that the Church 'must concede real authority to those from whom we ask substantial service'. Yet for

¹¹⁶ Gazette 31/5/96.

¹¹⁷ 'A Member' to Bishop of Durham 18/8/90. Auckland 84.

¹¹⁸ 1880 Diocesan Conference Minutes Durham Diocesan Calendar.

most in the Established Church, 'real power' was a limited concept. It certainly did not include the power to remove ministers invested in some Nonconformist congregations - since this would seem to undermine the clergy, as the Rev. W.F. Cosgrave told the 1897 conference:

The Methodists gave the laity great power but largely at the expense of the independence of their ministry. The problem for the Church of England was to get the good of that system without the evil.¹¹⁹

Nevertheless, it is clear that the Church was attempting to provide a role for lay mission. Indeed, Canon Savage's Church Workers' Union looked to prepare and sustain the lay ministry.

The careers of Canon Savage and the Reverend Mr. Evans also raise questions about the provenance of the Shields clergy. Between 1872 and 1914, twenty five vicars were appointed to the various Shields livings. Fifteen of these men had been curates in the town previously.¹²⁰ At times, this could be a sign of strength and popularity. The Rev. Mr. Coulson, of Holy Trinity, petitioned the Bishop to appoint his senior curate, Mr. E.M Wolstencroft, to the new living of St. Jude's in 1883. Indeed, the Holy Trinity churchwardens sent a petition signed by 1000 parishioners asking that Mr. Wolstencroft be appointed. When The Rev. Mr. W.J. Wingate, curate of Gateshead and a well known evangelical, was appointed to St. Jude's, Mr. Coulson wrote to the Bishop about the respect felt for Mr. Wolstencroft in the parish:

¹¹⁹ Gazette 20/10/97.

¹²⁰ Durham Diocesan Calendar passim.

They consider him a martyr, and the feeling is so strong in every part of my parish that I am certain that little or no help will ever be given by them in the erection of a new church.¹²¹

Yet whilst the appointment of local clergymen might suit the church in some ways, it could also serve to reinforce the image of the Established Church as a privileged clique, and an imposition from outside. Such an atmosphere surrounded the career of the Rev. Mr. Morris as vicar of St. Thomas', Westoe. Like Mr. Evans he was a Hatfield man; like Mr. Evans he antagonised parishioners sufficiently to provoke letters to the Bishop - one of 1887 described his conduct as 'intolerant and dishonourable' - and, perhaps most damningly, his appointment as treasurer of St. Mark's schools was suspended by the Department of Education on the advice of the Bishop of Durham in 1891.¹²² Morris's curates also petitioned the Bishop to receive their stipendiary grants direct, rather than via their vicar suggesting that Morris' treatment of his assistants resembled Evans's more than the careful shepherding of Canon Savage.

By contrast, evidence about Protestant Nonconformist clergy in South Shields is sparser than information about the Established Church. The pattern of itineracy in many of the churches meant that few were able to establish themselves as firmly as Anglican clergymen. One notable exception to this was the Rev. Metcalfe Grey, pastor of the Ocean Rd. Congregational church for over 40 years. His long service was recognised by the Durham and Newcastle Congregational Association, whom he served as secretary between 1885 and

¹²¹ Rev. J. Coulson to Bishop of Durham 3/10/83; J.T. Eltringham and T. Pratt to Bishop of Durham 10/11/83. Auckland 84.

¹²² A. Legat to Bishop of Durham 31/10/87; G. Kckewich to Bishop 11/4/91 Auckland 84.

1898. His was a fruitful pastorate, coinciding with the building of a new church and schools and the building of a Congregationalist church in Tyne Dock. Like Canon Savage he was a fervent educationalist, addressing his Mutual Improvement class on a wide variety of topics including a limelight show of Cornish views and legends, following his 1890 holiday in the peninsula.¹²³ He differed from Savage, however, in that he was elected by the Deacons of the Church and could be removed by a two thirds majority vote of that body. Whilst Metcalf Grey himself was never disciplined by his congregation, his son was suspended from membership of the church Guild in 1910.¹²⁴ Striking a balance between the respect inherent in professional ministry and the power of an independent congregation was a difficult task which men like Savage did not have to face. By 1912 the Durham and Northumberland Congregational Association was looking to find means of reinforcing the 'preacher's authority and power' which, thanks to advances in scientific understanding and new approaches to biblical study, 'have been on the wane for some time now...a fact that no-one conversant with the truth can doubt.'¹²⁵ Such concerns reflect the broader problems posed by the Congregational churches' acceptance of new theological and scientific ideas which helps to explain that 'undermining of authority' which the Anglicans recognised as a weakness in the free churches.

At the Emmanuel Baptist Free Church such problems were less pressing. This offshoot of the Westoe Rd. chapel was very much created in the image of its

¹²³ Gazette 12/11/90 and passim.

¹²⁴ Minutes of Ocean Rd. Congregational Guild 24/10/08.

¹²⁵ Records of the Durham and Northumberland Congregational Association 1912.

first minister, the Rev. G. Ernest Mason. Appointed pastor of the Westoe Rd. church in 1887, he had found the fetters of lay control too much to bear. To the historian of the South Shields Baptist Church Mason was 'an austere and uncompromising man'. In his 1891 dispute with the church elders - over qualifications for membership of the church - he seems to have displayed each of these qualities. Significantly, however, Mason was able to attract 'a significant body of the fellowship who were easily persuaded that "parson knows best" ' to follow his secession from Westoe Rd. to create the Emmanuel church.¹²⁶ Here he led a church 'which had definite dogmas and taught a very stern creed'. He was open in his criticism of other Nonconformist churches which had espoused a 'devotion to the devil's mission of amusement' and his opposition to state support for denominational schools was sufficient to see him imprisoned as a passive resister to the 1902 Education Act.¹²⁷ In 1890 Mason initiated a lengthy correspondence to the Gazette by asking readers to explain:

the inability of the South Shields pulpit to deal with the moral and spiritual degeneracy of our town¹²⁸

Mason's eye for controversial publicity may help to explain the success of the Emmanuel church, which, Robson reports, 'prospered during the lifetime of Mr. Mason but thereafter declined'.¹²⁹ It stands as an example of the power of a charismatic minister in a single chapel and suggests that not all nonconformist ministers were in thrall to their congregations.

¹²⁶ Robson A Church in Our Town pp.23-4.

¹²⁷ Gazette 4/7/95; 14/3/00; 17/3/05.

¹²⁸ Gazette 3/12/90.

¹²⁹ Robson A Church in Our Town p.25.

St. Bede's Catholic parish was served by ten priests during this period. According to McLeod, these men might have expected to exercise a 'priestly cultural imperialism' not evident in the Protestant denominations and rooted in the homogenous ethnic base of the Catholic population.¹³⁰ Priests and people were outsiders in English society and the priest became both a spiritual and a secular leader of the community. Strands of this attitude towards the Catholic community are evident in the Gazette's 1898 article on St. Bede's. It describes the mission's first priest, Fr. Kelly, as:

a well known figure in the riverside streets. Whenever any altercation came to be decided by fists, the losing side (I presume) were accustomed to shout: "Send for Fr. Kelly". So Fr. Kelly, nothing loath, used to come with his good stout staff and settle the dispute and very frequently, incidentally, the disputants.¹³¹

Evidence from the parish notice books corroborates the basic message of this rather crude stereotype of the Catholic priest. Direct appeals for financial support show one facet of this power, especially when buttressed with the spiritual apparatus of indulgences or other rewards, such as Fr. Little's 1878 appeal for £8 to £10 to allow 'decent vestments' to be purchased when potential donors were told that a mass would be said for them.¹³² The priest also exerted an influence over the cultural activities of his people. In the Northern Catholic Calendar of 1875 the Catholics of the diocese were told that:

¹³⁰ McLeod H. Class and Religion in the Late Victorian City (London, 1974) p.78.

¹³¹ Gazette 13/11/98.

¹³² Notice Book 1 13/10/78.

Catholic funerals are too often disgraced by drunkenness. Scenes have occurred at Christian funerals through the excessive use of drink, that have never been witnessed among Pagans¹³³

Priests at South Shields regularly warned their congregation against the evils of excessive drink most explicitly in Fr. Greene's advice in advance of St. Patrick's Day celebrations in 1890:

An Irishman who gets drunk on St. Patrick's Day dishonours St. Patrick, disgraces our Holy religion and is an enemy of his country¹³⁴

Whilst comments such as these need not mean that those attending church were intemperate - the priest may well have looked to the diffusion of his message amongst the Catholic population by those attending church - it is clear that some within the Catholic community were not taking notice of the message, a fact which alone calls a simplistic interpretation of 'cultural imperialism' into some question.

The Roman Catholic Church was, perhaps, more successful in directing the congregation in political issues, notably in the vital area of the education question. When Fr. Corboy and Mr. Victor Grunhut were elected 'almost at the head of the poll' in the School Board elections of 1880, it was declared to be 'a great honour' for South Shields Catholics.¹³⁵ Other denominations were wary of the power of the Catholic political machine in these board elections - as

¹³³ Northern Catholic Calendar 1875 p 74.

¹³⁴ Notice Book 4 16/3/90.

¹³⁵ Notice Book 1 18/1/80; 25/1/80.

witnessed by Canon Savage's 1891 circular calling upon his parishioners to turn out in numbers to elect Mr. Anderson, since, following boundary reorganisations:

a very large proportion of the district thus allocated to Mr. Anderson is in the poorest neighbourhood of the town; and in some parts Roman Catholic voters are especially numerous¹³⁶

Yet it would be wrong to extrapolate from this evidence the idea of a strong 'Catholic lobby' in the broader local politics of South Shields. Education was a particularly emotive issue, a matter of concern to even the most nominal Catholics and a banner around which to gather support. Further, the chance of success in elections was increased when constituencies were as small as those described by Savage. Even then, success was not guaranteed. The Northern Catholic Calendar shows that no South Shields Catholic sat as a Poor Law guardian and no Catholic councillor was elected until 1897. As late as 1911 the church felt it necessary to draft in a Jarrow councillor to address a special meeting on the necessity of Catholic organisation.¹³⁷ There seems little evidence in South Shields to contradict Fitzpatrick's view that there was no autonomous Irish (Catholic) voice in local politics with the caveat that the education question may have to be excluded.¹³⁸ There is certainly little evidence to support any idea of the priest exercising any 'imperial' powers over votes.

¹³⁶ Circular dated 17/1/91 enclosed in Scrapbook 14/6.

¹³⁷ Northern Catholic Calendar 1897; Notice Book 12 15/10/11.

¹³⁸ Fitzpatrick D. *A curious Middle Place: Irish in Britain 1871 - 1921* in Swift R. and Gilley S. (eds.) The Irish in Great Britain 1815-1939 (London, 1989) p.41.

'Imperialism' is, perhaps, most evident in matters spiritual. Sometimes this consisted of orders passed from on high - such as the prescriptive regulations for the observance of Holy Week in 1881:

Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday of this week are days of abstinence. On Good Friday no cheese allowed. Milk and butter are not allowed at collation and dripping is not allowed on that day. Eggs are not allowed on Thursday, Friday and Saturday.¹³⁹

Other messages arose from local circumstances. Poor attendance at services is a common - though, given the audience, a rather redundant - theme in the notice books. Fr. Greene asked his parishioners to 'show more faith and devotion !' by attending vespers and benediction; thirteen years later Fr. Vaughan told his parishioners that attendance at the Stations of the Cross was 'truly lamentable'.¹⁴⁰ Yet whilst attendance figures at Mass would be the envy of many other denominations,¹⁴¹ the Catholic priests clearly felt that they were not good enough. Here again, even amongst the selective sample of those who had already decided to attend church, 'priestly cultural imperialism' had its limits.

It is certainly true that the South Shields records do present a picture of a congregation not wholly in thrall to their priest. The 'Captious Critic' of the Shields Gazette had himself recognised this in 1898. Comparing the present day situation to the earlier mission of Fr. Kelly, he concluded:

¹³⁹ Notice Book 1: 10/4/81.

¹⁴⁰ Notice Book 5 12/3/93; Notice Book 11 29/8/09.

¹⁴¹ See Appendix D.

These were older and ruder days, however: much has happened since then. The Catholics have moved into a more fashionable quarter and a more imposing church... ¹⁴²

As the Catholic population of the town became more settled - more apparently 'respectable' - it seems likely that the priest may have been more willing to share responsibility with his congregation. Indeed, the very act of moving to Laygate Lane in 1874 had only been sanctioned by the diocese after the feeling of the congregation had been ascertained and the building of the new presbytery was only agreed after a whole congregation meeting to discuss the issue.¹⁴³ Nor were the financial demands of the church imposed without some form of consultation. Even the authoritarian Fr. Greene called a meeting to discuss the practicalities of the Day's Wage campaign of 1893 and confessed himself pleased with the unanimous support it gave to the scheme, an indication of the people's 'cordiality and good spirit'.¹⁴⁴ This is not to deny Supple's conclusion 'most of the clergy strongly resisted such lay interference in the financial affairs of the missions', but it does suggest a willingness to hear the views of the laity.¹⁴⁵ Indeed, men's meetings were a not uncommon occurrence at St. Bede's. In August 1889 one such meeting had the broad remit of 'arranging parish affairs' and was open to 'all the men, whether young or old, rich or poor'.¹⁴⁶ Seven years previously a meeting to discuss parish finances was attended by both men and women from

¹⁴² Extract from Gazette (n.d.) enclosed in Notice Book 7.

¹⁴³ Notice Book 2 26/8/83.

¹⁴⁴ Notice Book 5 14/5/93.

¹⁴⁵ Supple J.F. *The Role of the Catholic Laity in Yorkshire 1850-1900* in Recusant History vol. 18 no. 3 (March 1987) p.308.

¹⁴⁶ Notice Book 3 18/8/89.

the parish.¹⁴⁷ Perhaps most indicative of lay influence over mission policy was the introduction in 1913, 'in response to a number of enquiries' of a 7-00 a.m. Mass, which Fr. Byrne said would continue 'If it is found that it is required'.¹⁴⁸ Of course, none of these examples proves that the Catholic church was a democratic institution, nor that the Catholic priests of South Shields were anything other than the 'figures of authority' described by Gilley.¹⁴⁹ Yet, whilst acknowledging that the South Shields notice books smack of authoritarian priests and submissive flocks and that mass meetings of the congregation might be nothing more than thinly disguised means for the priest to impose his will on the people, there can be little doubt that there was active lay participation in the running of the parish beyond the simple level of handing over money. Indeed, priests, especially those newly arrived on the mission, needed the support of the laity to run the parish effectively, and seem to have made active attempts to cultivate it. Perhaps the best model for the relationship between priest and people was that proposed by Fr. Burton at a public dinner on behalf of the Catholic Benefit Society held in the Golden Lion hotel in November 1898. In a speech reminiscent of Canon Savage's model of effective Anglican priesthood, Burton referred to:

the popularity which the priests do undoubtedly enjoy, and the hold they possess in the hearts of their people. One could see the reason of that because the priest was after all a public servant...He was at their beck and call any hour of the day and night.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ Notice Book 1 6/8/82.

¹⁴⁸ Notice Book 13 11/4/13.

¹⁴⁹ Gilley S. *Catholics and Socialists in Scotland 1900-30* in Swift and Gilley *The Irish in Great Britain* p.216

¹⁵⁰ Gazette 13/11/98.

In short, the priest was no longer the 'cultural imperialist' which he may have been in the time of Fr. Kelly. Faced with an active following of less than half the town's Catholics, and in an age when even Catholicism had to recognise that the church could no longer demand support as of right, he could hardly afford to be.

Mission and Revivalism.

The provision of more and bigger buildings with a trained staff to carry out the churches' work suggests the hope of larger congregations. Direct revival methods were a traditional means of recruiting them and thereby of tackling the perceived problem of 'decline'. For Kent:

Victorian revivalism sought in the last quarter of the century to halt [the] shrinking of the influence of the Church¹⁵¹

They were used - to a greater or lesser extent - by almost all the denominations in all three of the areas studied and involved methods of creating or increasing commitment to the churches in order to revive religious faith. This section will attempt to illustrate some of the differences in revival as practised by the different denominations and in the context of different communities. It will also attempt to evaluate the success of this method in addressing the churches' fears.

South Shields.

Revivalist efforts by the Established Church in South Shields during this period took the form of parochial missions; an Anglo Catholic strategy inspired by the example of Roman Catholicism and often linked to the work of Canon George Body, Canon Missioner to the Durham Diocese after 1883. His obituary paid tribute to:

a preacher of rare individuality and persuasiveness [who] from the first took his part as a convinced adherent of the Oxford revival

¹⁵¹ Kent J.H.S. Holding the Fort: Studies in Victorian Revivalism (London, 1978) p.290.

and threw in his lot with the English Church Union and other organisations of the same school of Churchmanship.¹⁵²

Body organised a mission in St. Hilda's parish in 1885 which was credited with deepening religious life amongst regular attenders, increasing the number of communicants in the parish and bringing some permanent additions to the congregation - mainly from amongst the working classes. As late as 1905 the Rev. Mr. Bilbrough - recently appointed vicar of St. Hilda's - cited the six missions he had conducted alongside Canon Body as evidence for the power of revival through the Holy Spirit.¹⁵³ Whilst Kent's assertion that Anglo Catholic missions declined in importance after the 1880s may be true, they had clearly not died out entirely. In 1905 even the Nonconformist Gazette could praise Body and his fellow missionaries for bringing 'the breath' into new and old parishes and for:

carrying on a forward movement which has made the days of Bishop Baring look like the very nadir of stagnation.¹⁵⁴

Body's link with St. Hilda's seems to have been particularly close. At the institution of Bilbrough's successor in 1910 he stated that:

he knew of no congregation in the whole diocese where there was a greater number of men and women of all sections of the community standing back to back and shoulder to shoulder, co-operating with their clergy and striving for their clergy.¹⁵⁵

This affinity may have been related to the Anglo Catholic style of churchmanship at St. Hilda's. Canon Chester, vicar from 1862 to 1883, was listed in the English

¹⁵² The Guardian 9/6/11.

¹⁵³ Visitation Return St Hilda's 1886; Canon Bilbrough to Gazette 11/2/05.

¹⁵⁴ Gazette 13/1/05.

¹⁵⁵ Press report, n.d., enclosed in Scrapbook 14/7.

Churchman of 1885 as a signatory of a petition to convocation in favour of popish vestments and of an 1881 petition tolerating 'extreme ritual' in the church. His former curate, the Rev. C.E. Adamson (later the first vicar of St. Michael's), had also signed the vestments petition.¹⁵⁶ Canon Bilbrough, vicar from 1905 to 1910, had served as a curate under the Rev. G.L. King at St. Mary's parish where, it was reported in 1899, 'illegal Romish vestments' were worn and day time lights were placed on the altar. Significantly, Canon Savage had preached a sermon defending the Rev. Mr. King against charges of ritualism.¹⁵⁷ During his incumbency at St. Hilda's the tradition of daily choral services continued and one choir boy - W.J. Swinbanks - attended 360 of the 365 services held in the church in 1902; a feat described in the parish record as:

probably...unique amongst all the parish churches of England as an instance of sustained and enthusiastic voluntary choir service.

The commitment extended to other choir boys too - on average 16.9 boys attended each service in 1902.¹⁵⁸ St. Hilda's was not alone in its High Church practices. At St. Thomas' the Rev. Mr. Morris, another member of the English Church Union, was criticised for practices such as 'elevation of the chalice and adoration of the host' in 1887.¹⁵⁹ Whilst there is insufficient evidence to support 'Layman's' 1893 claim that only one of the nine Anglican churches in South

¹⁵⁶ Printed in Chronicle 30/10/85.

¹⁵⁷ Newcastle Journal 15/3/99 ; press clipping, n.d., enclosed in Scrapbook 14/6.

¹⁵⁸ St. Hilda's Parish Record, March 1903, enclosed in Scrapbook 14/7.

¹⁵⁹ Dr. D. Legat to Bishop, 20/9/87 Auckland 84.

Shields was a place where low churchmen might happily worship,¹⁶⁰ it is clear that Anglo Catholic practices were common in the town.

Further investigation of styles of Anglican churchmanship in South Shields is beyond the scope of this study; in any case, the issue was, perhaps, a less contentious one by the end of the period. Yet a recognition of the prevalence of Anglo Catholic practices in the town is related to an assessment of the success of missions during this period since they aimed, in part, to increase respect for the Eucharist. Certainly the Established Church provided more opportunities for communion during this period. At St. Hilda's, for example, communion services were held every other week in 1870; by 1904 they were held every week and twice on alternate Sundays. St. Mark's, described by 'Layman' as the one evangelical church in the town in 1893, had followed the same pattern since 1900. Attendance at major festivals could be high - 443 Easter Communicants at St. Hilda's in 1892, 416 Christmas Communicants seven years later - but regular attendance was much lower. In 1904, for example, Canon Savage reported an average of 79 communicants each week from a sample of 26 Sundays; his estimate for attendance at Matins was 700 and 1200 regularly attended Evensong.¹⁶¹ In order to promote attendance at the sacrament churches instigated activities such as the weekly communicants' meeting held in St. Thomas' parish in 1896 or the formation of a Communicants' Association at St. Stephen's church which, it was hoped, would be attractive to non communicants too since:

¹⁶⁰ See above p.122

¹⁶¹ Visitation Returns passim.

by this means the work of the Church would be extended, and others who seldom or never attend the Lord's Table might be led to realise the necessity for regular participation

At St. Hilda's the Guild of the Good Shepherd, its name indicating its Catholic leanings, was instituted in 1887, in response to Canon Body's suggestion during his mission of 1885. Its members were to communicate once a month, to attend divine service regularly - during the week if possible - and to abstain from evil.¹⁶² Yet despite such activities, and the sporadic efforts of the missionaries, attendance at Communion remained low relative to that at other services. Growing numbers of people confirmed (Canon Savage is credited with increasing the number of communicants during his incumbency at St. Hilda's by 3-400%¹⁶³) did not necessarily produce an increase in the number taking communion on a regular basis.

The extent to which the Anglo Catholics had borrowed the methods of the Roman Church is evident from an examination of mission in St. Bede's parish. Here too, missionaries sought to deepen the spirituality of existing church members. Nine missions took place during this period. Conducted by religious orders, each lasted for at least one week and targeted men, women and children separately. In 1881, for example, the Missionary Fathers visited the parish for a five week period; the first two of which were devoted to work amongst children, the last three were reserved for work with adults. Four years earlier, a mission by the Redemptorist Fathers was described as a period of extraordinary grace and a

¹⁶² Visitation Return St. Thomas's 1896; St. Stephen's Parish Magazine June 1887; St. Hilda's Parish Magazine March 1887.

¹⁶³ Gazette 10/5/04.

time of Mercy and Blessing in which God emphasised the need to save souls. The significance of the visit was clear:

Many who are now in heaven are there because they took advantage of this grace...many are now lost because they were careless to avail themselves of it.¹⁶⁴

In 1890, notices about a Redemptorist mission were to be posted in every Roman Catholic house in the parish so that sinners might be saved by attending it. Salvation could be secured by attendance at Mass. An appeal to all Catholics who were not confirmed to attend confirmation classes accompanied the announcement of the Redemptorists' visit of 1907 and during the mission of 1877, mass was held four times on both Sundays and weekdays.¹⁶⁵ The confraternities of the period further underline the emphasis placed by Ultramontane Catholicism on devotion to the Blessed Sacrament.

Confraternities were, essentially, an attempt to recapture the piety of medieval Catholicism by uniting the faithful in the practice of their devotions. They remain stubborn to trace, not only because specific confraternity records for St. Bede's do not exist, but also because, as Gilley explains:

Confraternities were unstable institutions...dissolving and then in a fresh burst of zeal, reforming in a new devotional mode under a new devotional name.¹⁶⁶

This metamorphic process helps to explain why so many different groups existed in St. Bede's. Some had particular purposes beyond the purely devotional. The

¹⁶⁴ Notice Book 1 23/10/81; 2/9/77.

¹⁶⁵ Notice Book 4 21/9/90; Notice Book 11 6/10/07; Notice Book 1 2/9/77.

¹⁶⁶ Gilley S. in Dyos H.J. and Wolff M. (eds.) The Victorian City: Images and Realities vol. 2 (London, 1973) p.847.

Confraternity of The Holy Cross, for example, is described as a temperance confraternity in the Northern Catholic Calendar of 1875, but no trace of it exists in the Notice Books.¹⁶⁷ Other confraternities were associated with particular devotional groups in the church. The Confraternity of the Brown Scapular, a Carmelite group, enrolled members at St. Bede's in 1893 - when a Brigittine indulgence was offered to those who joined - and again in 1905, though no further details about the organisation exist in the notice books.¹⁶⁸ The best documented confraternities seem to have existed consecutively. The Confraternity of the Holy Family is first mentioned in 1877. It organised general communion services for members, retreats and vigils at the Blessed Sacrament during the Easter 40 hours devotion, at which members were to wear the medals which marked out all confraternity members. Weekly devotions took place on Tuesday evening. The Confraternity seems to have made special attempts to attract men - it may have been open to men only at first as an 1878 notice refers to each member receiving 'his' patron saint for the year - but it had separate men's and women's branches by 1879. Lay prefects and subprefects shared in the government of the organisation, though, as is to be expected in such a purely devotional group, overall direction seems to have been in the hands of the clergy.¹⁶⁹ The Confraternity of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, founded in 1885 shared all of these features with its predecessor. Spirituality was again central to the Confraternity, as was explained in 1889:

The Confraternity is not intended merely for pious and perfect Christians; but it is intended for poor struggling souls, and it is a

¹⁶⁷ Northern Catholic Calendar 1875.

¹⁶⁸ Notice Book 8 20/8/93; Notice Book 9 18/6/05.

¹⁶⁹ Notice Book 1 7/10/77; 27/12/78; 23/3/79; 18/6/81.

help for all who desire to be good Christians. Every parishioner who wishes to be a good Christian should join this Confraternity.¹⁷⁰

The note of exhortation sounded by Fr. Greene may perhaps be explained by the apparent difficulties facing the group. In June 1889 a meeting had been held of 'all who desire the Confraternity to continue in this parish', but any attempts to revive this group seem to have been short lived, as the last reference to it appears in 1892.¹⁷¹ It seems then to have merged with a revitalised Confraternity of the Holy Family, inspired by the Pope's instruction to consider the renewal of Christian devotion in Catholic homes and, perhaps, by the Silver Jubilee of the Holy Family Confraternity, which drew a procession of about 10,000 to the streets of Wexford and Limerick in 1893. Yet even these imperatives could not sustain the new group, and Canon Greene was left to lament:

Why should not the Confraternity of the Holy Family flourish in the same way at South Shields ? What is there in the character of the Catholics of this town that makes them fall off from every good work they take in hand ? Let not this reproach be cast upon us by other parishes.¹⁷²

After the failure to revive the Confraternity of the Holy Family, the notice books fall silent on the matter of confraternities until the first reference to the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart in 1907. This too was a revival of an earlier organisation of the same name, which is identified in the Northern Catholic Calendar of 1875 but disappears from the Notice Books after 1878.¹⁷³ In its later

¹⁷⁰ Notice Book 3 14/7/89.

¹⁷¹ *ibid* 30/6/89 and Notice Book 5 11/12/92.

¹⁷² Notice Book 5 1/10/93.

¹⁷³ Northern Catholic Calendar 1875. Notice Book 1 17/12/78 gives last reference to the organisation.

manifestation, it seems to exhibit all the features associated with the earlier confraternities in its devotional work and meetings and in its organisation into separate men's, women's and children's branches. Like its predecessors it faced difficulty in recruiting male support. In 1909, Fr. Vaughan asked for 'a fresh renewal of vigour' amongst the men of the Confraternity, yet three years later, his successor stated that, whilst the women's and children's branches flourished, the men's did not.¹⁷⁴

In short, the confraternities seem to have been a vehicle to reinforce spirituality amongst those - within the Catholic constituency - already committed to the church. They do not seem to have been especially successful in recruiting those lapsed Catholics who were not attending Mass, and the evidence would suggest that they were particularly unsuccessful in attracting male support - especially from adolescent boys, amongst whom:

membership of confraternities tended to be low, and there was a good deal of despondency among priests about this age group.¹⁷⁵

It is, perhaps, indicative of this that the one devotional organisation which seems to have continued uninterrupted through this period at St. Bede's was the Altar Society, to which references are made across the whole period.¹⁷⁶ This was an organisation with an exclusively female membership and a clear purpose - collection of money. The focus was beneficial; without it another all female

¹⁷⁴ Notice Book 11 3/1/09; Visitation Return 1912.

¹⁷⁵ McLeod H. *Building the Catholic Ghetto: Catholic Organisations 1870-1914* in Sheils W.J. and Wood D. (eds.) *Voluntary Religion* (London, 1986) p.420

¹⁷⁶ Notice Book 1 9/9/97; Notice Book 12 2/1/10.

organisation - the Living Rosary - appears to have ended after 1889.¹⁷⁷ A further indication of the failure of purely spiritual means to attract the uncommitted might lie in the short life of the Confraternity of St. Joseph, which appears to have been organised into boys' and girls' branches, but which met at the same time as the Sunday School and which might, therefore, have targeted adolescent groups. Founded in 1890 it appears to have died out by 1893.¹⁷⁸

How successful were the missions and Confraternities in their central aim of persuading Catholics to attend Mass? *Status Animarum* returns make possible a more accurate estimate of church attendance amongst Roman Catholics than amongst any of the Protestant denominations. They show that by no means all Catholics in the parish attended mass. This is not to say that they did not come into contact with the church in other ways but it does suggest that the primary objectives of the missions and confraternities were not being fulfilled. The priests certainly seem to have thought so. Canon Greene publicly regretted in 1893:

In this parish there is great indifference to religion. That so many should neglect or refuse to contribute to the church to help clear off the debt on the House of God, and should prefer to keep the little contribution for their own selfish indulgence - that indeed is sinful, that is deplorable and is disreputable to the parish. But it is far more sinful, it is far more deplorable that they should be indifferent to their own salvation, and that they should refuse to have the Mercy of God for themselves. Several hundred of our parishioners are in this state, having neglected to go to confession and Holy Communion at Easter time or since.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷ The last reference to the Living Rosary in South Shields is in Notice Book 3 27/10/89. This was an international organisation, founded by Jaricot in France and made official in 1822. See *Dictionnaire de Spiritualite* vol. 13 col. 971-3.

¹⁷⁸ Notice Book 4 26/10/90; Notice Book 5 13/8/93.

¹⁷⁹ Notice Book 5 23/4/93

His estimation of Catholics not attending mass may have been optimistic. Figures for 1893 show that only 34.3% of the estimated total Catholic population of the town made their Easter Communion in that year. Attendance at Sunday mass was lower still - 30.75% - but the figure is close enough to the Easter figure to suggest that whilst a hard core of practising Catholics attended mass even Easter did little to attract the less committed members of the Catholic population. Indeed, at no time during the period 1882-1914 did attendance at Easter Mass reach 50% of the total Catholic population, though the 45.45% who attended in 1897 was a considerably higher figure than the 37.5% of the Catholic population who attended Sunday Masses in 1888 - the highest Sunday figure.¹⁸⁰ The Roman Catholics of South Shields were not unusually lax in their pattern of attendance. McLeod describes the attendance of about 50% of Catholic adults in New York in 1901 at church as being 'a remarkably high figure by European urban standards'¹⁸¹ whilst Fitzpatrick has shown that less than 40% of the Catholic population of Liverpool attended mass in 1881 and that, even though raw attendance figures were increasing in all the major towns, they very rarely kept pace with the overall growth in population. Various factors - some relevant to religious observance in general, some specific to Roman Catholicism - help to account for this phenomenon. The significant point here is that revivalist and purely devotional methods were not alone capable of staunching the 'Leakage' from regular attendance at Mass which so worried the Catholic authorities. On the basis of the South Shields evidence, it is difficult to argue with Fitzpatrick's analysis of nineteenth century urban Catholicism, that:

¹⁸⁰ See Appendix D.

¹⁸¹ McLeod in Sheils and Wood Voluntary Religion p.433.

In general, the returns of Easter obligation, church attendance, marriages and baptisms indicate that, in a period of rapid secularisation, the Catholic church in Britain elicited stable but by no means general participation from its nominal membership.¹⁸²

It is generally held that the function of revivalism amongst Protestant nonconformists changed during the nineteenth century. Kent places the transition from 'ancient to modern' revivalism in 1860. In place of the radical, emotional revivalism which had characterised groups like the Primitive Methodists of the 1820s, the later variant was controlled by the religious establishment and sought to reinforce the beliefs and attitudes of existing chapel goers rather than to attract new members. Even the 'Holiness Revivalism' of the 1860s onwards - epitomised by the Salvation Army in its early years - had no influence outside those already predisposed to religious activity 'the lower social levels of British religious sub culture'.¹⁸³ Evidence from South Shields, whilst limited in scope, does seem to support this generally held belief. The 'Great Holiness Convention' held by the Primitive Methodists of the Glebe chapel in 1890, for example, involved meetings of preachers and special services throughout the circuit, rather than attempts to evangelise non attenders. It certainly seems to have inspired other denominations - the Congregationalists of Ocean Rd. cited it as the main influence on their decision to hold a six day mission in their church - but there is little evidence of it attracting large numbers of converts.¹⁸⁴ Of course, the revivalism associated with

¹⁸² Fitzpatrick *A Curious Middle Place* p.31.

¹⁸³ Kent *Holding the Fort* p.334.

¹⁸⁴ *Gazette* 19/9/90; 30/9/90.

the Camp Meeting of the earlier century was no longer especially appropriate to an urban congregation which had just opened a new chapel costing almost £5,000 nor were potential converts so easy to reach in large towns as they had been in the villages in which Primitive Methodism was born. For the town's Wesleyans mission was related to the need to provide buildings. Visiting the Chapter Row chapel in 1895, the Rev. W.D. Walters of the London Mission spoke of the need for a 'forward movement' in South Shields to match that being inspired by the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes in London:

because the population there [South Shields] had grown so wonderfully - more than in the surrounding towns - and he feared the spiritual condition had not kept pace with the growth; as Wesleyan Methodists they had not kept pace with the growth of population

As Mr. Walters went on to explain that Hughes's work in London was inspired by the need to provide religious sittings for the 2 million not presently accommodated, the emphasis may again be seen to be on provision of buildings rather than evangelical conversion.¹⁸⁵ Only the excitement surrounding the revival of 1905 recaptures the spirit of earlier revivalism.

In January 1905 the Gazette reported that South Shields was 'on the eve of a great revival'. This was clearly not unrelated to the Welsh Revival which was earlier reported to have been 'stirring minds' across the North of England, though the Gazette did claim that the revival on Tyneside predated the developments in the Principality since:

¹⁸⁵ Gazette 21/6/95.

For months past an awakened interest in religion has been permeating the churches of South Shields... ¹⁸⁶

In part, this stemmed from careful work on the part of the town's churches. The Free Church Council had organised special prayer meetings and sermons to promote the spirit of revival and, through the columns of the Gazette, tried to create a bandwagon of success by references to 'frequent' and 'remarkable' conversions. Individual stories such as that of Jane Todd -a veteran of 120 court appearances who voluntarily put herself into a Salvationists' Rescue Home after attending a Salvation Army Prayer Meeting - were eagerly reported. So too were the conversions of 'street loungers and drunken miners' by the Baptist Mission in Percy St., a group which attracted so many sinners in 1905 that meetings had to be moved to the larger premises of the Miners' Hall. The United Methodists in Queen St. reported that two inhabitants of one of the town's lodging houses attended their mission and were converted after two of their fellows had died during a New Year 'orgie'.¹⁸⁷ Nowhere does the enthusiasm for revival seem to have been stronger than amongst the Wesleyan Methodists of the town, contradicting Cox's suggestion that the denomination had rejected adult conversion as a means of winning support in favour of gradual socialisation into chapel life. Rather, the Gazette reported that:

Every Sunday night, almost every place in the circuit, Chapter Row included, conversions occur. This is a return to old Methodist form and the present movement has in it all the elements of continuity.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁶ Gazette 13/1/05; 19/1/05.

¹⁸⁷ *ibid.* 25/1/05; 19/1/05.

¹⁸⁸ Cox The English Churches p.248; Gazette 19/1/05.

At the Baring St. chapel a ten day mission in February included a two and a half hour service during which 24 'started a new life' and over 100 sang 'Take My Life' at the Communion rail. The place, it was reported, 'was on fire'. At Frederick St., a Saturday midnight service 'fairly caught on' and attracted 'both drunk and sober adults', including one man so drunk that he would have been ejected from a music hall. Some of the congregation had to be helped to their seats but were welcomed into the chapel, their treatment:

exemplified to a remarkable degree the solicitude and patience
which the leaders of this revival are devoting to their work

Their work typified the evangelical style of the period, not least in the continued use of the inquiry room - regarded by Kent as central to the work of Moody in his visits to Britain. In all, 800 were reported to have passed through the inquiry rooms or presented themselves at the communion rails of the Wesleyan churches of the circuit by March 1905.¹⁸⁹

What had been the effect of all this effort ? At the Frederick St. Wesleyan chapel it had brought about the formation of an institute 'which had been a great safeguard to so many men'.¹⁹⁰ Yet elsewhere, success appears to have been much more limited in scale. Even at the Salvation Army, 'the congenial home of revivalism', only three or four penitents appeared on weekday evenings during the January height of the revival, with six to eight conversions on Sundays. At the Glebe Primitive Methodist chapel, two drunks were reported to have taken communion and asked for penitence in February.¹⁹¹ Cases such as this serve to

¹⁸⁹ Gazette 14/2/05; 15/2/05; 6/3/05; Kent J. Holding the Fort ppo.204-214; Gazette 18/3/05.

¹⁹⁰ Gazette 20/1/10.

¹⁹¹ *ibid.* 25/1/05; 4/2/05.

emphasise that revivalist efforts in 1905 had as much to do with popular lifestyles as with evangelical conversion. Adjutant Hardy of the Cuthbert St. Salvation Army citadel looked to a great general revival which:

will lessen the drunkenness and the betting and gambling and swearing and the indifference to church and chapel going which are so fearfully present.¹⁹²

Such changes in lifestyle might be recognised as evidence of the Holy Spirit at work - indeed, Adjutant Hardy suggested that some conversions in 1905 showed the efficacy of prayers that God might make the beer in pubs distasteful. Yet it is clear that the revival of 1905 concentrated on instilling respectable patterns of behaviour as much as winning new converts. This may help to explain some of the references to conversions from within church communities. At the Queen St. United Methodist chapel, for example, 'many Sunday school teachers stood up to consecrate themselves to God'; at the Glebe Primitive Methodist chapel about 50 Sunday scholars 'came out for God' whilst at the Primitives' Wenlock Rd. chapel all the choir and organist were 'converted' on one evening.¹⁹³ Jane Todd, redeemed through the agency of the Salvation Army, was herself the daughter of Salvationists. In explaining the incidence of conversions within the churches, Adjutant Hardy's distinction between three stages of revival - within individuals, within churches and within the world at large - is helpful. South Shields, he argued, was at the second stage in 1905. For those who sought larger goals, however, the revivalist fervour of 1905 was nothing more than a manufactured hysteria. J. Brown Logie, of the Mile End Rd. Presbyterian church, reported

¹⁹² Gazette 25/1/05.

¹⁹³ *ibid.* 19/1/05; 4/2/05; 23/1/05.

there was no direct evidence of revival in his church in January 1905, 'but much talk of it'. 'Sceptic' wrote to the Gazette complaining that the Welsh Revival approached 'the abyss of religious hysteria', echoing a rumour, which the Gazette had earlier tried to scotch, that Welsh lunatic asylums had been filling during the revival there.¹⁹⁴ The Rev. Mr. Mason of the Emmanuel Baptist Free Church stated that there were no signs of revival in the town in January 1905, citing as evidence a united communion service held by the South Shields Free Churches which had attracted fewer than 200 and at which;

more than half the free churches failed to be represented by a single lay member.¹⁹⁵

Mr. Mason's views are particularly damning in the light of his imprisonment in March 1905 for failing to pay that percentage of the rate which funded education. This not only underlines his commitment to the cause of Nonconformity, but also calls into question the widely perceived link between the 1905 revival and the political furore surrounding the 1902 Education Act. At the very least, it seems likely that the denominations who made the most of the revival were not necessarily the most committed to the political struggle. The Wesleyans nationally refused to support the Passive Resistance campaign and it is, perhaps, significant that the large crowd which greeted the Rev. Mr. Mason on his release was reported to contain a large number of Primitive Methodists rather than Wesleyans.¹⁹⁶ Mason and his supporters were engaged in a struggle described by Bebbington as 'a classic crusade of unprecedented proportions', yet a struggle

¹⁹⁴ Gazette 21/1/05; 18/2/05; 17/1/05.

¹⁹⁵ *ibid.* 25/1/05.

¹⁹⁶ Bebbington D.W. The Nonconformist Conscience: Chapel and Politics 1870-1914 (London, 1982) p.144; Gazette 3/4/05.

which was, ultimately, fought with outdated methods and which demonstrated 'the futility of the crusading style of politics for dealing with a complex issue'.¹⁹⁷ A similar criticism might be levelled at the revival of 1905 itself, pervaded, as it is, with a sense of artificiality. There is little evidence from the borough to contradict Gilbert's view that:

The religious revivals...of 1904-6, far from reflecting a new dynamism in English religion, represented sporadic and short lived resumptions of the kind of growth which had been normal during the earlier phase of mobilisation in evangelical nonconformity.¹⁹⁸

Deerness Valley and Teesdale.

A study of revivalism and mission in rural areas produces both comparisons and contrasts with South Shields. Moore argues that as Methodism became established in the Deerness Valley so the need for such direct methods was reduced. Most Methodists entered the chapels via the Sunday school rather than as a result of personal conversion.¹⁹⁹ Yet missions continued in the villages and continued to reach relatively large numbers of people. East Hedleyhope experienced a month of Primitive Methodist revival services in 1880, as a result of which 'nearly 30 persons profess to have received good [sic]'. At Hamsteels, ten years later, a united mission brass band, accompanied by eight local Methodist choirs, entertained over 600. The New Connexion Methodists employed lady missionaries at Cornsay Colliery in 1900 and Hamilton Row in

¹⁹⁷ Bebbington D.W. *The Nonconformist Conscience* p.142; p.148.

¹⁹⁸ Gilbert A.D. *Religion and Society in Industrial England* (London, 1976) p.193.

¹⁹⁹ Moore R. *Pitmen, Preachers and Politics: The Effects of Methodism in a Durham Mining Community* (Cambridge, 1974) p.153.

1905. Sometimes the missions were a response to particular local circumstances, as with the Wesleyan mission at Hedley Hill in 1905. Here:

the society, which suffered a great loss by the recent lying idle of the colliery, has thus been replenished in membership.

The Baptists too were willing to resort to old fashioned revivalism to promote their cause. In 1880 the Rev. Mr. Dunnington of Hartlepool addressed the Waterhouses Baptists and:

urged those Christians at Waterhouses to take courage although persecuted, because their Lord had blessed and increased them nearly three hundred per cent during the last few months - a thing previously unheard of in the county of Durham.

The Baptists continued to hold missions as late as 1910.²⁰⁰ In 1905 John Raw, stalwart of the congregation and stationmaster at Esh, told his fellow Baptists that the Passive Resisters formed part of the:

great shout of opposition against the Education Act [which] meant a great revival in religion, a stronger Protestantism and Nonconformity.²⁰¹

This spirit of revival may have helped to inspire the mission carried out by the Hedley Hill Wesleyans and the work of Miss Cox as missionary to the Hamilton Row New Connexion Methodists. At Esh Winning the Primitive Methodists organised midnight services in the Market Place at which Gospel songs were sung:

chiefly with a view to attract the men from the public houses and the workingmen's clubs...a large crowd assembled and many were deeply moved by the message of the missionary...This memorable

²⁰⁰ Chronicle: 22/10/80; 27/6/90; 2/3/00; 21/4/05; 14/4/05; 11/6/80; 30/9/10.

²⁰¹ Chronicle 7/4/05.

service closed about one o'clock on Sunday morning. There were several conversions.²⁰²

Even though large scale revivals were perhaps easier to orchestrate in large urban areas than in smaller rural communities, the events of the Welsh Revival had clearly not passed the Nonconformists of the Deerness Valley by. The effect of such activity is difficult to trace, though the Rev. Mr. White's remark in his 1896 visitation return from Esh that:

The people are Methodistical and fond of religious excitement - crowd to special missions - then go on as before²⁰³

might justifiably be seen as both an endorsement and a criticism of revivalist methods. In the Anglican Church itself, mission appears to have been much more sparingly used in the villages than in the towns. Committing missionaries' time and effort to relatively small areas in which Nonconformity was dominant may have seemed an ineffective use of resources for the church, though Canon Body did visit Esh and subsequently recommended a lay missionary who stayed for four months in the Winter of 1885-6. Neither visit appears to have been a great success, the Rev. Mr. Hodge commenting in 1886 that 'the visit had no very visible result, but was certainly supportive'.²⁰⁴ His successor as vicar suggested that the parish could not support the kind of communicants' guild which he had organised elsewhere because of its 'scattered population and geographical conditions'.²⁰⁵ From Waterhouses the Rev. Mr. Smith reported that the lack of a curate made it difficult to carry out effective work amongst his parish of

²⁰² Chronicle 17/3/05.

²⁰³ Visitation Return Esh 1896.

²⁰⁴ Visitation Return Esh 1886.

²⁰⁵ Visitation Return Esh 1892.

3,000.²⁰⁶ There would seem to be some truth in each of these comments, though it should be added that whilst similar problems faced the Roman Catholic church, the parish of Newhouse was nevertheless able to organise missions and Confraternities throughout this period. Visitation returns for 1907, for example, record two 'flourishing' Confraternities and missions - both by the Redemptorists - in 1905 and 1906.²⁰⁷ These alone are not sufficient to explain the high figures of attendance at services evident amongst the Roman Catholic population of the valley. In 1896, for example, average attendance at Sunday Mass peaked at 66.25% of the total Catholic population in the parish whilst Easter communicants reached a high point of 79.46% of the Catholic population in 1900 and only once fell below 50% during the whole period.²⁰⁸ Together the continuation of mission work and the high attendance figures do serve to underline the greater piety evident amongst rural communities.

In Teesdale, demographic changes meant that religious organisations faced a problem of numerical decline not evident in any of the other communities studied and revivalist efforts were set against this context. Statistics of decline - in numbers attending Anglican services and in Methodist membership - are clear enough,²⁰⁹ and both visitation returns and Methodist minutes give qualitative evidence of the process. Anglican priests appear to have borrowed some of the methods of the Anglo Catholic missions to improve attendance particularly at the Eucharist. The Rev. W.H. Philpott, for example, explained in his 1896 return that

²⁰⁶ Visitation Return Waterhouses 1896.

²⁰⁷ Visitation Return Newhouse 1907.

²⁰⁸ See Appendix D.

²⁰⁹ See Appendix E.

on his arrival in Forest in 1889 there were only four to five communicants whose attendance at the sacrament was very irregular, yet:

By steady persevering effort, frequent house to house visiting and pastoral instruction I am pleased to state that God has blessed my efforts so that up to the present time there are now 36 communicants, most of whom are regular: 17 were confirmed last May and all except one have communicated.²¹⁰

Likewise in Middleton, the arrival of the Rev. W.F. Yates Rooker and family witnessed the introduction of processional and recessional hymns to the services by 1911. The Mercury reported on the 'bright and cheerful' Easter services held in St. Mary's in 1911:

The record attendance at the early celebration and at the mid-day choral communion show very clearly that the new Rector is steadily and surely making his influence felt in the parish.²¹¹

The process by which an individual clergyman's character and efforts could affect attendance at Anglican services is a common feature in Teesdale, South Shields and the Deerness Valley. Yet such efforts marked only a temporary change in an overall pattern of falling numbers as witnessed at Eggleston, where visitation returns show that attendance at all Sunday services fell from a total of 260 in 1882 to 140 in 1904. Missions were not employed to arrest this decline, the vicar reporting that:

²¹⁰ Visitation Return Forest 1896.

²¹¹ Mercury 19/4/11.

our people tend to look upon mission services as a substitute for those of a church.²¹²

The absence of mission work is coincidental to falling numbers rather than the sole cause of decline, though the example of Eggleston again suggests that Anglo Catholic mission activity was appropriate to urban rather than rural parishes.

In the Nonconformist churches of upper Teesdale, however, the tradition of revivalist methods was a long one and predates the economic factors which caused the decline in numbers as the period progressed. Revivalism was central to the churches and not simply a pragmatic response to difficult circumstances. As early as 1875 the Baptists held revival services. In 1879 Primitive Methodist Quarterly meeting resolved:

revivalists should be available without visiting the general committee and thus incurring a serious waste of time

and the following year the Wesleyan circuit meeting agreed to conduct revival services during the winter months.²¹³ In 1890 the Middleton Wesleyans engaged Miss Holmes of Carlisle 'who stands in the first ranks of the evangelists of the day'. The Mercury's summary of her work, whilst not entirely flattering, does suggest why revivalism maintained its importance for local Nonconformists:

The results have not been all that could have been desired, though we do not doubt that the seeds which have been sown so faithfully

²¹² Visitation Returns Eggleston 1882 and 1904 give average attendance figures. In 1882 average congregations were given as 60 for the morning service and 200 in the evening. In 1904 an accurate average gave 42½ attending morning service with 67 in the evening and 30 at an afternoon children's service. Since individuals could attend all three services in 1904 and only two in 1882, it may be that the decline was even more marked. Visitation Return Eggleston 1896.

²¹³ Mercury 13/1/75; Middleton PMC Minute Book 6/12/79; TWC Minute Book 17/9/80.

and diligently will not altogether have fallen upon stony ground, but will bring forth at some time an abundant harvest.²¹⁴

Falling population numbers acted as a further stimulus to missionary efforts. The Primitive Methodist Circuit appointed professional evangelists and local lay 'mission bands' and accepted a visit from Mr. Jermy and his Gospel Mission van in 1905.²¹⁵ The Wesleyans hosted missions by the Rev. J. Champness, accepted a £40 grant from the connexional Home Missions' Committee towards a lay evangelist for the winter of 1902-3 and asked the district meeting for 'one of Mr. Cook's mission cars' in 1903. Four years later, in a discussion of the work of God in the circuit the 'idea prevalent seemed to be no converts unless a special effort or mission'.²¹⁶ In short, the Nonconformists of upper Teesdale seem to have continued revivalist activity on a large scale longer than any of the other communities studied. There is a parallel here with the continuation of the class meeting amongst the Methodists of the dale. There is some evidence that elsewhere in the country - not least in the Deerness Valley - the importance of the traditional class meeting was diminishing. As early as 1897 the Waterhouses Wesleyans had agreed to replace class meetings with Wesley Guild meetings. In upper Teesdale no such tendency is apparent. Wesleyan circuit returns recorded members by class throughout the period and whilst the class meeting system was discussed in a quarterly meeting of 1908, it was still in place two years later, when the circuit passed a resolution to form class leader conventions.²¹⁷ And

²¹⁴ TWC Minute Book 17/12/90.

²¹⁵ Middleton PMC Minute Book 18/5/95; 31/8/95; 3/12/04.

²¹⁶ TWC Minute Book 1/12/93; 14/6/02; 6/3/03; 14/9/07.

²¹⁷ *ibid.* 12/9/08; 17/12/10.

whilst the Mercury commented in 1905 that the Middleton Primitive Methodist Lovefeast was well attended:

though there was not that religious enthusiasm expressed that used to be manifested by the fathers of primitive Methodism. The old custom of handing round bread and water has almost died out in Teesdale. Bowlees is the only place in the circuit that keeps the custom up.²¹⁸

the Primitive Methodist Circuit meeting was still traditional enough in its outlook to urge all its members to attend classes 'to the best of their ability to the cause of God'.²¹⁹ The methods of the Evangelical Revival thus lasted longer in the rural seclusion of upper Teesdale than in urban South Shields or, indeed, the recently developed Deerness Valley.

²¹⁸ Mercury 19/7/05

²¹⁹ Middleton PMC Minute Book 9/12/93.

Chapter 4: The Churches and Children.

Introduction.

This chapter examines the churches' work with children, concentrating especially on Sunday schools and related activities. Modern authorities have pointed to the importance of such work for the churches, arguing that they need to recruit from amongst the children of members in order to grow and that such a 'juvenile constituency assumed major importance' as the nineteenth century progressed.¹ Yet for all its importance, the term 'childhood' is not always easy to define. The age of transition between childhood and adolescence (itself a term of only relatively recent currency) was by no means fixed.² Contemporary authorities were unclear too - the majority placing it somewhere between 14 and 16, suggesting that the ending of childhood was by no means synonymous with the ending of compulsory education or entry into paid employment. Social, occupational, locational and denominational factors are clearly important here and may help to explain why some young people were willing to stay on as Sunday scholars until they were clearly young adults - scholars as old as 22 were at listed at St. Simon's, South Shields; St. Paul's, Waterhouses had scholars aged 20.³ Whilst some Sunday schools might more properly be termed bible classes, it is nevertheless clear that Sunday school was not an activity entirely confined to childhood. In fact, Sunday schools provided significant opportunities for adult activity - both in

¹ Currie R., Gilbert A. and Horsley L. Churches and Churchgoers: Patterns of Church Growth in the British Isles Since 1700 (Oxford, 1977) pp.46-54; Gilbert A. D. Religion and Society in Industrial England (London, 1976) p.200.

² Springhall J. Coming of Age: Adolescence in Britain 1860 - 1960. (Hong Kong, 1986) pp.22-27. Springhall discusses the 'discovery of adolescence' by educational reformers and social scientists in the 1890s and 1900s.

³ Visitation Returns St. Simon's; Waterhouses 1904.

teaching and administration - and for adult participation in events such as anniversaries and entertainments. Visitation schemes were common. At St. Stephen's, South Shields the families of Sunday scholars were visited along with the newly baptised, communicants and relatives of the recently deceased.

For Stanley such activities made the Sunday school:

the churches' most substantial beach head amidst the hostile
expanse of working class irreligion

and for Yeo schools were:

the most important inspiration of church/chapel penumbra
from the mid nineteenth century onwards.⁴

The schools enabled the churches to cater for 'family religion', an area seen as important not only by modern sources but also by the general tenor of contemporary visitation returns with their questions about family prayer and the nature of home life amongst the working classes.⁵ Yet for all its broader significance, it is clear that the main role of the Sunday school remained its work amongst children. A number of factors combined to shape this work during this period. Obelkevich has shown that the general shift away from adult conversion in the Protestant Nonconformist churches meant that a greater emphasis was placed on the Sunday school as a means of recruiting children, especially if, as Cox's study of Lambeth suggests, the effect of 'Lift' in these congregations was to produce a shift to the Establishment amongst the children of dissenters.⁶ The revival of Anglican fortunes as the period

⁴ Visitation Return St. Stephen's 1908; Stanley B. in *Missionary Regiments for Immanuel's Service: Juvenile Missionary Organisation in English Sunday Schools 1841 - 65* in Wood D. ed., *The Church and Childhood: Studies in Church History* no. 31. (Oxford, 1994) p.392; Yeo S. *Religion and Voluntary Organisations in Crisis* (London, 1976) p.63.

⁵ Visitation Returns passim.

⁶ Obelkevich J.T. *Religion and Rural Society: South Lindsey 1825-1875* (Oxford, 1976) p.229; Gilbert *Religion and Society* pp.198-203; Cox J. *The English Churches in a Secular Society: Lambeth 1870-1930* (New York, 1982) p.237.

progressed ensured that the Establishment also paid due attention to educational matters - in both day and Sunday contexts. Opening the new Sunday school building at St. Michael's as late as 1910, Canon Savage, by then Dean of Lichfield, explained:

The day for Sunday school was far from over. As the years went on the eventual need of strong Sunday school teaching and influence became more and more apparent.⁷

The advent of compulsory day schooling during this period brought about a reassessment of the work of the schools. For the Anglican parent organisation, the Forster and Mundella Acts heralded 'a new era' in the history of the Sunday school, whilst in North Shields the Methodist Free Church anniversary gathering of 1870 was told that:

Sabbath schools had now lost all trace of secularity and had come to be looked on altogether as affording religious and moral training.⁸

This joint emphasis - on moral and religious training - made Sunday schools an institution of continuing importance despite the growing competition from day schools with better resources and developing standards of professionalism. By 1914 their role had changed, but they were not seen as superfluous. Indeed, the diocese of Durham was sufficiently concerned about the work of Sunday schools to commission a report into their working and to form a diocesan association of teachers, to ensure that the Sunday schools could serve - in the words of the Bishop of Jarrow - as 'a handmaid for the support of the regular teaching of religion in the day schools.'⁹

⁷ Gazette 14/4/10.

⁸ From a Church of England Sunday School Institute booklet (n.d.) enclosed in St. Hilda's Parish Sunday School Teachers' Minute Book 2/7/80; Gazette 18/1/70.

⁹ Durham County Advertiser 23/1/14.

Provision of Sunday schools.

The provision of Sunday schools during this period clearly illustrates their continuing importance to the churches studied. Even the Unitarians - described by Laqueur (albeit with reference to an earlier period) as the Protestant denomination least likely to have an interest in Sunday schools - had a school room under their Derby Street chapel and reported an attendance of about 150 scholars, teachers and friends at their 1895 New Year's Day Tea.¹⁰ Purpose built rooms were not always available. Some churches were obliged to use the church building itself for Sunday school work, though this was generally regarded as unsatisfactory. As the Vicar of St. Aidan's explained in 1900, the holding of classes in church:

detracts from the reverence, the comfort and the sublime position of the church

At St Thomas', plans to establish 'a systematic order of teaching throughout the school' involved both the appointment of Mr. J.C. Hayden as Sunday school superintendent and the building of two Sunday schools to bring to an end the practice of teaching in church.¹¹ Other congregations were fortunate enough to have access to day schools in which classes could take place on Sundays - St. Hilda's, for example, made use of the Old Charity Schools - whilst at the other extreme, the new parish of St. Oswin's reported holding temporary outdoor classes in 1908 because of the shortage of space elsewhere.¹² For the majority of churches, however, the solution was to

¹⁰ Laqueur T. W. Religion and Respectability: Sunday Schools and Working Class Culture 1780 - 1850 (London, 1976) p.46; Gazette 21/3/75; 4/1/95.

¹¹ Gazette 16/1/00; Rev. J. Morris and Mr. J.C. Heyden to the Bishop of Durham 2/7/87 and 25/9/87) Auckland 84.

¹² Visitation Return St. Oswin's 1908.

provide designated Sunday school buildings. No less a person than J.C. Stevenson M.P. gave public encouragement to such activity, telling the Sunday School Union annual meetings of 1880 and 1890 of his pleasure in seeing the growing number of schools.¹³ Building was costly. St. Michael's Sunday school and parish hall of 1910, for example, cost the church £3,324, with a further £3,280 spent on furnishings and solicitors' and contractors' fees.¹⁴ Certainly the nature of the parish meant that St. Michael's could afford such apparently extravagant tastes, but other less prosperous congregations looked to similar building programmes too.

Several factors influenced this expansion. Schools had to respond to the changing residential patterns of the town as did their parent churches. Thus, when the Primitive Methodists decided to relocate to Westoe Lane in 1890, a new Sunday school was required. For an outlay of £1,500, the society got a school to sit 600 scholars (including 200 infants). In the same year 400 Glebe scholars attended the annual Sunday School Union Good Friday parade,¹⁵ suggesting that Sunday school building on such a large scale was by no means unrealistic, especially in a period in which the town's population was growing rapidly; a demographic factor which provided a further reason for building more Sunday schools. St. Jude's parish was created to serve a rapidly expanding part of the town, whose social composition was 'exclusively working class', in 1883. Here £1,665 was spent on building a Sunday school and parish hall which opened even before the church itself at a time when the congregation continued to worship in the Co-operative buildings in Palmerston Street. St Jude's thus provides a South Shields example of the phenomenon noted by Chadwick in Camberwell, where a six fold growth in

¹³ *Gazette* 23/3/80; 5/4/90.

¹⁴ *ibid.* 14/4/10.

¹⁵ *ibid.* 13/3/90; 15/4/90.

the number of churches in the period 1851 - 1903 was 'almost always' the result of an adult congregation growing from the nucleus of a Sunday school.¹⁶ Such 'mission' work was, in itself, a powerful incentive to build. In 1877 the Zion Methodist New Connexion Sunday school teachers recorded their determination to build a branch of their school 'somewhere in the town'; seven months later they had 'taken control of the Johnson's Hill mission school, appointing officers for that enterprise.'¹⁷ The impetus to mission might reasonably be expected to be strong amongst those denominations - like the New Connexion Methodists - which had relatively small numbers and few places of worship in the town. Certainly the Congregationalists were equally keen to develop mission schools, commissioning a report into the possibility of such a school in 1873.¹⁸ Yet the need for mission was not confined to such groups. The Primitive Methodists of Laygate Lane had seen their mission school grow from 80 to about 250 scholars in two years.¹⁹ St. Stephen's parish church had a mission school at Mile End Road, the Sunday school building project at St. Thomas' in 1887 involved both a building by the church and a wholly separate mission building in Thames Street and Holy Trinity was developing a mission Sunday school in 1908, at which time the Vicar reported:

The parish is becoming more and more a "slum" parish and has to be worked largely by the use of mission rooms.²⁰

¹⁶ Visitation Return St. Jude's 1886 and Gazette 11/6/85; Chadwick O. The Victorian Church vol. 2 (London, 1970) p.239.

¹⁷ Zion (Laygate Lane) M.N.C. Chapel Sunday School Teachers' Minute Book 10/7/76; 12/2/77.

¹⁸ Ocean Rd. Congregational Church, Sunday School Teachers' Minute Book 15/1/73.

¹⁹ Gazette 28/12/85.

²⁰ The Rev. J. Morris to Bishop, 21/10/87 Auckland 84; St. Stephen's Parish Magazine passim.; Visitation Return Holy Trinity 1908.

Mission schools not only provided educational facilities for the young but also served as centres of church activity in growing - often working class - areas of the town.

Teaching, however, remained the *raison d'être* of the schools, and changes in pedagogy were a further motive for building. Significantly, the new hall at St. Jude's was divided into rooms:

thus rendering the place in all ways suitable for Sunday school purposes.²¹

The Congregationalists of Ocean Rd. built their new Sunday school in 1893. J.H. Morton's plans of 1891 included within the new building the 'original school room', but the new buildings were far more elaborate, encompassing a 40 ft. by 54 ft. hall as well as eight first floor classrooms, a separate infant school and three built in bookcases. If the Sunday schools were to compare favourably with the improving standards set in day education, the days when Congregationalist Sunday scholars could be expected to sit in one room in Wallis St. were clearly past.²² Not all congregations could meet the financial cost of providing appropriate modern facilities for their scholars, and those who did not ran the risk of losing out in that interdenominational rivalry for youngsters which was itself a further stimulus to Sunday school building. The vicar of the newly formed St. Aidan's parish lost no time in pressing the need for some form of building programme on the authorities. Writing in 1886 the Rev. L.D. Evans informed the Bishop:

There is no place of worship, not even a Sunday school by the dissenters within the boundaries of the District. My whole effort will be to keep it so by supplying the spiritual wants of

²¹ Gazette 11/6/85.

²² *ibid.* 14/9/86; Plans for Ocean Rd. Congregational Church Sunday School July 1891.

the inhabitants which can only be done by prompt assistance from loyal churchmen.²³

Similar concerns may be seen in the South Shields Congregationalists' minute of 1868 calling for the building of a Sunday school at Tyne Dock as:

Not having a cause established at Tyne Dock the Children belonged to other churches and when anything special was going on at other chapels they went there.²⁴

Such rivalry was not without attendant costs as schools, like churches, were expensive. In 1905 the Free Methodists were saddled with a mortgage of £2,000 and a 'floating debt' of £1,068 to cover the costs of their new church and school in Westoe, a project towards which the scholars and their teachers had themselves raised £37:10:0. Collections amongst scholars also helped to finance the St. Michael's schools of 1910. Of course, the churches were not left with a building used only on Sundays. The buildings at St. Michael's were to be used for any purposes:

having in view the spiritual, intellectual and social wants of the professing members of the Church of England in the parish ²⁵

Nevertheless, the costs involved in building Sunday schools were high, even given their secondary usage; clearly the denominations felt the provision of Sunday schools a worthwhile activity. This is particularly underlined by the Middleton Wesleyans' efforts in opening their Sunday school of 1906 at a time when the society's number of scholars was falling rapidly - the 122 on the books in 1905 were 40 fewer than in 1887. Given this, the decision to build a school to accommodate 359 scholars at a cost of £900 seems an unnecessary

²³ The Rev. L.D. Evans to Bishop 18/10/86 Auckland 84. The Rev. Mr. Evans was not related to the vicar of St. Mark's (see above pp. 117-123).

²⁴ Ocean Rd. Congregationalist Church Sunday School Teachers Minute Book 5/2/68.

²⁵ Gazette 14/4/10; 22/4/05.

extravagance. Yet the Middleton Wesleyans were responding to pressures similar to those felt in South Shields. As the Teesdale Mercury explained:

the march of modern improvements and the exigencies of the hour call for a new Sabbath school in this quiet little town

Nor were the Middleton Wesleyans burdened with the cost of building new suburban plant. Rather, they could invest in a development which provided the opportunity for a reaffirmation of Wesleyan values and community status, as the Mercury explained in its report of the school opening:

The company then repaired to the old school room where a real country Wesleyan tea took place...Rarely has such religious fervour been witnessed in Teesdale.²⁶

In only two areas was the desire to provide Sunday schools not marked. In smaller rural parishes, the Established Church faced difficulties. In Forest, for example, the Anglican Sunday school attracted an average of seven children in 1882 and, despite a revival around the turn of the century, they were again in decline by 1912. Most families with young children lived 2-3 miles from the church whilst those living closer had grown up families. In Hamsteels, few Sunday scholars attended as the road to the church from the largest centre of population in the village was long and exposed and difficult to pass in the winter months.²⁷ Clearly the Anglican Church was less willing and less able to meet the problems faced by changing settlement patterns outside the big towns than in the urban centres. Such problems could be compounded by denominational rivalry, as at Eggleston, where the Wesleyan Methodist Sunday school was well established, as reported by the Rev. Thomas Jones in 1874:

²⁶ Mercury 24/5/05.

²⁷ Visitation Returns Forest 1882 (the figure of 7 was an average taken over a six month period) and 1912; Hamsteels 1904.

The important subject of Sunday school has always been one of considerable difficulty for the Incumbent of Egglestone [sic]. There is an old established school every Sunday afternoon, which is fairly attended, and open to all children. This from its commencement nearly 40 years ago has been very mainly under the influence and control of dissenters, who are a strong body in the Parish, and very jealous of the Church.

In 1890 there was no Anglican Sunday school in Eggleston, the Rev. C.E.O. Griffiths stating that he preferred weekly catechism to a Sunday school 'in a small parish' and 18 years later the schools relied solely on the incumbent taking morning and afternoon classes himself.²⁸ The rural Teesdale parishes thus suggest that, given its continuing role in providing weekday education, the Anglican Church was willing to accept that its nonconformist rivals might dominate the Sunday schools.

The Roman Catholic Church was less committed to Sunday schools than any of its Protestant rivals. In the Deerness Valley, for example, fewer than half of the Catholic children in Newhouse parish were recorded as attending Sunday school in 1903; ten years later Fr. Beech reported that no Sunday school existed in the parish.²⁹ At St. Bede's, South Shields school was regularly cancelled in the summer months and fewer than a quarter of Catholic children in the town were reported as attending in 1883.³⁰ Several factors may help to explain this. The emphasis placed by the church on providing day school places for Catholic youngsters rendered Sunday schools less important. Children were admitted into apparently adult organisations -

²⁸ Visitation Returns Eggleston 1874; 1890; 1908.

²⁹ Status Animarum returns for Newhouse, 1903 and 1910.

³⁰ Notice Books 11/2/83 and passim. See Appendix D.

such as the confraternities - much more readily in the Catholic church than in Protestant denominations and the practice of childhood confirmation made Sunday school less relevant to the Catholic church. The Catholic church was also less willing to allow lay people to teach religion than were the Protestant churches. In the light of all these factors, the Roman Catholics remained alone amongst the major denominations in their limited provision of Sunday schools.

Teachers and Curriculum.

In 1901 the annual vestry meeting at St. Hilda's passed its first ever vote of thanks to the parish's Sunday school teachers and the magazine somewhat belatedly acknowledged that:

There is certainly no body of workers to whom the church owes more than them.

Fourteen years earlier, the parishioners of St. Stephen's had been told that Sunday school teaching:

is the highest work which a man can undertake, and if done for the glory of God will bring great reward.³¹

Even such promises were not always sufficient to recruit staff. In 1893 St. Stephen's parish was still looking for more staff to make the boys' school 'what it should be, a power in the parish.' Both St. Michael's and St. Jude's parish reported inadequate teacher numbers during this period and the East St. Presbyterians and Ocean Rd. Congregationalists were both obliged to appeal to the wider congregation of their respective churches for new

³¹ St. Hilda's Parish Magazine, May 1901; St. Stephen's Parish Magazine, August 1887.

teachers.³² Yet the picture was not all gloomy. Statistical returns from the South Shields and Deerness Primitive Methodist Circuits suggest that - in that denomination at least - there were adequate numbers of teachers for the numbers of scholars in the schools. Similar Wesleyan returns for the Teesdale Circuit would suggest that in terms of teacher numbers, those schools were even better provided for than their urban counterparts, perhaps a reflection of the lack of alternative opportunities for potential teachers in rural areas. The South Shields and Deerness Valley teachers do seem to have been more regular in attendance at school than the Teesdale teachers. Whilst the statistics do seem to reflect a less regular pattern of teacher attendance towards the end of the period, the sample is probably too small to enable a definite conclusions to be drawn from this.³³

Similar problems of limited sources beset any attempt to categorise the type of person involved in Sunday school teaching. Some Anglican records suggest that there were too few male teachers in schools. The 1893 appeal for teachers at St. Stephen's was specifically designed to recruit teachers for the boys' school. Canon Baily was even more explicit in his January 1889 review of St. Hilda's parish, commenting that the Sunday school was healthy but needed more young men teachers. Two years earlier, class lists for the school show a staff of 14 in the girls' school - all women - and only three men amongst the 12 teachers in the boys' school. In 1904, the incumbent of St. Mary's reported a staff of 40 female teachers in his Sunday school and the Church Workers' Union Sunday school teachers' examination results of 1900

³² St. Stephen's Parish Magazine November 1893; Visitation Returns St. Michael's 1904; St. Jude's 1892; St. Paul's United Presbyterian Church Sunday School Teachers' Minute Book 6/8/82; 6/12/85; Ocean Road Congregationalist Church Sunday School Teachers' Minute Book 22/8/13.

³³ See Appendix F. Note that all references are to 'ideal' pupil teacher ratios - i.e. the total number of teachers relative to the total number of scholars on the roll. Neither variable takes account of regularity of attendance.

record 22 women amongst the 24 people who passed the examination.³⁴ Amongst the women involved, spinsters seem to have been particularly important - at St. Hilda's in 1867, for example, 25 teachers comprised 17 unmarried women, one married woman and seven men.³⁵ Yet for all their numerical predominance, women rarely seem to have played managerial roles in the Anglican schools, save in the running of girls' and infants' classes. At St. Hilda's, the superintendent of the boys' school was always a man, and by 1898 F.W. Pollock had become honorary secretary of the Sunday school teachers. For men like Pollock, Sunday school teaching could be a route to further responsibility in the church. Male Sunday school teachers at St. Hilda's in 1876 included John Winlo (elected member of the select vestry and churchwarden in 1895), William Tully (later treasurer of the Bible Class), Thomas Vasey and T.T. Anderson (both later Vice Presidents of the Young Men's Institute) and J.R. Hall, long term secretary of the Men's Bible Class and Churchwarden. Other teachers included James Sedcole - a Sunday school teacher in 1890, manager of the parish day school in 1892 and churchwarden in 1899, a position held by F.W. Pollock the previous year.³⁶ None of this need suggest that Sunday school teaching necessarily fitted men like these for management roles, but it did show their commitment to the church and allow them to display something of their managerial skills - perhaps a form of apprenticeship for later work. For many women, of course, marriage limited such possibilities. For those who remained spinsters, Sunday school in a parish like St. Hilda's seems to have provided an opportunity for the daughters of wealthy families (such as the ship owning Cottews and Cays) to

³⁴ St. Stephen's Parish Magazine November 1893 ; St. Hilda's Parish Magazine January 1889; Scrapbook 14/3 list of Sunday School Attendance Prizewinners 1887; Visitation Return St. Mary's 1904; Press clipping 16/10/00 enclosed in Scrapbook 14/6.

³⁵ St. Hilda's Parish Sunday School Teachers' Minute Book 7/1/67.

³⁶ *ibid.* passim.

perform good works and to participate in 'professional' activity, without needing to enter into paid employment. The presence of such teachers was vital, according to E.F. Boyd, a colliery manager with 50 years experience of Sunday school teaching, who told the Durham Diocesan Conference of 1880 that the working classes who sent their children to Sunday school did so in the expectation that teachers would exert the 'refining influence of those above them' on such children and that the Established Church would thus be:

The solder of that crack [class prejudice] which threatens to creep into a yawning chasm, not by false pretences of equality...but by the deep sense of fraternity.³⁷

The process would be mutually beneficial as the diocesan conference was told in 1883 by the Rural Dean of Bishopwearmouth:

By bringing the young of the wealthy into constant intercourse with the poor we teach them to cultivate their best sympathies. Thus they learn something of the harsh realities of life.

Incumbents of suburban parishes should send their young people into poorer parishes as 'Sunday school teachers, district visitors and other parochial workers' in order to combat the 'hateful tendency to exclusiveness, selfishness, indolence' which suburban life brought.³⁸

Parishes in the mining villages faced different problems. The vicar of Esh reported in 1904 that finding suitable teachers was causing:

great difficulty, as there appears to be an increasing dislike of the work. The teachers must necessarily be of the same class and from the same families as the scholars, and are seldom equal to the scholars in learning or intelligence.³⁹

³⁷ Durham Diocesan Calendar 1880.

³⁸ Durham Diocesan Calendar 1883 xlv.

³⁹ Visitation Return Esh 1904.

In Teesdale the problem was even worse. At Eggleston the incumbent could find no lay help and was obliged to take morning and afternoon classes himself.⁴⁰ In short, any picture of a 'typical' Sunday school teacher - even within the Established church - would be misleading, since the location of a parish, along with the relative prosperity of its congregation - were important determining factors.

Similar reservations must apply to any categorisation of teachers in Nonconformist schools, though significant points of difference between teachers in such schools and those of the Established Church may be drawn. The difficulties of recruiting 'suitable' teachers which the Established Church found in the mining districts were not felt by the Methodist bodies, more used to relying on lay help and less concerned about the 'class' of lay helpers than were the Anglicans - Moore argues, for example, that many Deerness Valley lessons required the teacher to display the gifts of the spirit rather than in depth study and learning.⁴¹ Nonconformist schools also attracted male teachers. Of the 84 teachers listed in the Ocean Road Congregationalist Teachers' Minute Book 1905-1913, 47 were men. South Shields Primitive Methodist statistics also show a majority of men amongst teachers. In the Deerness Valley - with fewer young women of the leisured classes, where the tradition of Methodist respectability discussed by Moore meant that women may have been more likely to stay in the home and where economic factors meant that most young women had to leave the villages to find work - the bias in favour of men is even more marked.⁴² As in the Anglican schools,

⁴⁰ Visitation Return Eggleston 1908.

⁴¹ Moore R. Pitmen, Preachers and Politics: The Effects of Methodism in a Durham Mining Community (Cambridge, 1974) p.113.

⁴² See Appendix G.

positions of authority in dissenting schools tended to be held by men. When the Zion Methodist New Connexion church decided that a short address should be delivered to scholars at the end of morning lessons, the task was explicitly given to male teachers.⁴³ Amongst the positions of responsibility which may be traced amongst the Ocean Road Congregationalist teachers 1905 - 1913, the offices of Superintendent, vice-superintendent, secretary, treasurer, librarian, musical officer, transfer secretary, S.S.U. representative and I.B.R.A. secretary were all held by men. Of the 37 women teachers, one was the school's pianist with three other lady deputies, two of whom sat on the hymn committee. Only the office of L.M.S. secretary was held by both men and women during this period, with Joan Huggit and Rose Dry occupying the post from 1910 onwards.⁴⁴ Clearly the schools were complex administrative bodies offering opportunities for significant lay participation. Equally clearly these opportunities were rarely open to women.

One area in which women did play an important part was visiting. Asked specifically by the 1904 visitation survey about the provision of women's work in their parish, five Anglican parishes in the towns included visiting in their answers, the incumbent of St. Mary's referring to a group of 42 lady visitors in his parish.⁴⁵ Sunday scholars provided an *entree* into homes, as the superintendent of St. Paul's Presbyterian Sunday school told his teachers in 1888:

there was a large and increasing number of scholars whose parents did not come to this church and [he] urged the

⁴³ Zion M.N.C. Sunday School Teachers' Minute Book 3/3/73.

⁴⁴ Ocean Road Congregationalist Church Sunday School Teachers' Minute Book passim.

⁴⁵ Visitation Returns St. Hilda's; Holy Trinity; St. Mary's; St. Mark's; St. Aidan's 1904.

importance of each teacher visiting the homes of the scholars in their respective classes.⁴⁶

At St. Hilda's, Canon Chester was credited with introducing a system of visiting by Sunday school teachers in 1866.⁴⁷ Formally organised, with their own meetings and rules, the Sunday school teacher visitors clearly formed a prototype for later schemes for general visiting of the sick and those not attending services.

The ability of unsalaried and untrained church workers to discharge their primary function as teachers has been subject to both contemporary and scholarly criticism. Opening St. Michael's Sunday school in 1910, the Dean of Lichfield remarked:

The development, and the perfection almost, of day school teaching made it clear that they could not have haphazard teaching in the Sunday school.⁴⁸

The Diocesan Sunday School Teachers' Association of 1914 was designed to provide 'a remedy for existing weaknesses' in the schools.⁴⁹ Cliff's study suggests concern was justified. Between 1870 and 1913 teachers:

perhaps relied on a number of favourite passages, with a great deal of moralising...the result of this, when other happenings, events, excitements, amusements and newer forms of transport emerged, was that both children and the younger teachers began to vote 'out' with their feet.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ St. Paul's Presbyterian Church Sunday School Teachers' Minute Book 13/5/88.

⁴⁷ St. Hilda's Parish Magazine, January 1896.

⁴⁸ Gazette 14/4/10.

⁴⁹ Durham County Advertiser 23/1/14.

⁵⁰ Cliff P.B., The Rise and Development of the Sunday School Movement in England 1780 - 1980 (Redhill, 1986) p.182.

Certainly there is evidence to support Cliff's criticisms. In rural parishes in particular, Sunday school work could be repetitive and dull. In the Deerness valley, the lack of suitable staff at Esh created a situation in which:

there is very little teaching. Singing of hymns, reading scripture is the most attempted.

In neighbouring Waterhouses teaching chiefly consisted of 'learning a chapter or two of Holy Scripture' as late as 1904.⁵¹ The isolation of the valley and the limitations of the teaching staff might explain this limited diet, though some South Shields churches showed little more invention in their Sunday school work. The Rev. Joseph Morris at St. Thomas' believed that children did not 'know their Bibles as they did 20 years ago'. In 1900 he told the Bishop:

Religious education in the day schools leaves the children without any body of fixed truths and no sure hold of the spirit of the Bible so that Sunday school work should be such that the child might have a daily portion to do, and learning a Gospel seems to be the best way of effecting this.⁵²

A similar system seems to have prevailed at St. Simon's from where the 1912 visitation return serves as a commentary on all that was wrong with some Sunday school teaching:

There was no systematic teaching when I came, the scholars simply read a chapter or two over and over again with no explanation whatsoever. Insistence on a proper lesson and regularity has meant an almost entire change of teachers, but the end has justified the means. I hoped to hold a preparation class on condition that the majority attend regularly. This could not be arranged and dropped through. I am hoping to be more fortunate when we reopen the matter this Autumn. It so often happens that the few who do attend need the class less than the others.⁵³

⁵¹ Visitation Returns Esh 1886; Waterhouses 1904.

⁵² Visitation Return St. Thomas's 1892; 1900.

⁵³ Visitation Return St. Simon's 1912.

Mr. Haverick's comments hint that some good practice could be found in Sunday schools. Organisations existed to promote this. From 1851 onwards, Nonconformist teachers were supported by the South Shields Sunday School Union. Financed by subscriptions from member schools and with representatives from each school on its governing body, the Union provided teaching materials such as the box of moveable letters requested by the Zion New Connexion Methodists in 1864. The same denomination also took the S.S.U.'s lessons, ordering 100 lists in 1865.⁵⁴ The S.S.U. also provided opportunities for teacher education, encouraging all schools to hold teacher preparation classes and organising its own 'Normal Class' for teachers and senior scholars in 1878.⁵⁵ In 1907 the union showed its ability to keep up with broader developments in the field, organising a course of lectures on 'Child Study' by George Hamilton Archibald, the Canadian pioneer of 'graded' Sunday schools and founder of Selly Oak training college for Sunday school teachers, cited by Cliff as the dominant figure in Sunday school work during the first thirty years of the twentieth century.⁵⁶ The Union set examinations and awarded a shield to the school with the best performance, won for the third successive year by the Emmanuel Baptist Free Church in 1910.⁵⁷ Visitation by union representatives acted as a check on the quality of work done; Mr. W.C. Taylor, for example, pronounced himself 'satisfied' by all he had seen at St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in 1885.⁵⁸ The Deerness Valley

⁵⁴ Zion M.N.C. Sunday School Teachers' Minute Book A.G.M. 1864 and 28/12/65.

⁵⁵ ibid. 14/10/78.

⁵⁶ Ocean Rd. Congregationalist Church, Sunday School Teachers' Minute Book 4/6/07; Cliff Sunday School Movement pp.205-8.

⁵⁷ Gazette 16/9/10.

⁵⁸ Zion M.N.C. Sunday School Teachers' Minute Book 15/5/76.

branch, active from at least 1890, performed a similar role, albeit on a smaller scale. Lectures covered subjects such as temperance, gambling, the retention of elder scholars and parental influence and the Sabbath school.⁵⁹ The absence of any such body amongst the Teesdale Nonconformists may help to explain something of the lack of innovation about their Sunday school work.

For the Anglicans in both valleys, no such organisation existed; the smaller parishes in strongly nonconformist areas lacked the resources and numbers to form such a body. South Shields Anglicans did, however, respond to the Church of England Sunday School Institute's 1877 encouragement to form local organisations. The Jarrow Deanery Sunday School Teachers' Association was active from 1883 onwards, organising lectures for teachers and model lessons throughout the town. Topics covered - "Some difficulties in a teacher's work and how to overcome them", "Teachers' aids and aims" - suggest a concern to provide good quality teaching in the 1880s.⁶⁰ The Association seems to have enjoyed only a limited life span and by 1892 its work was undertaken by the Church Workers' Union. Its remit extended beyond Sunday school work to include church defence, evangelistic work and church music. Yet it clearly played a role similar to the S.S.U. with its meetings on various aspects of Sunday school work, its administration of C.E.S.S.I. examinations for both teachers and pupils and its general concern to improve the education of lay teachers in the Sunday schools.⁶¹

The existence of such bodies did not ensure continued innovation in Sunday school teaching. Reflecting on Sunday school work at St. Hilda's

⁵⁹ Chronicle 21/3/90 and 25/10/95.

⁶⁰ C.E.S.S.I. pamphlet n.d. (1877?) included in Minute Book of St. Hilda's Sunday School Teachers; Minute Book of Jarrow Deanery Sunday School Teachers' Association 1883-7.

⁶¹ C.W.U. Circular of 28/9/92 included in Scrapbook 14/4.

during his incumbency, Canon Savage - moving spirit of the C.W.U. - pointed to a school:

which was carried out practically on the lines laid down by Canon Chester 40 years ago.⁶²

Significantly, when Savage's predecessor had introduced report cards into the school in 1888, information conveyed to parents included a section on their child's ability to learn by heart the content of lessons.⁶³ True, there had been some changes to the 1869 system based on the learning of catechisms, the Gospel and Collect, leavened by hymns and picture stories. From 1889 onwards, the parish published one, undifferentiated lesson for each Sunday of the month. On February 3rd. of that year, 2 Kings 5 1-19 formed the basis of the lesson, with a commentary - 'Naaman to Syria what Wellington was to England' - and lessons to be drawn - 'do not despise God's way because it is simple'.⁶⁴ A similar system of regular lessons appeared at St. Stephen's in 1898.⁶⁵ Such systems tended to make a more child centred approach to teaching difficult, as the East Street Presbyterians had recognised as early as 1877:

the objection [to undifferentiated lessons] being the difficulty of getting subjects suitable for both old and young, for whereas in the mornings subjects for the present year's lists were chiefly confined to the New Testament, and consequently were more suitable for children, those of the afternoon were for the most part taken from the Old Testament and considered to be a more advanced lesson.⁶⁶

⁶² Press clipping (n.d.) for 10/10/04 parish 'At Home', enclosed in Scrapbook 14/7.

⁶³ St. Hilda's Parish Magazine December 1888.

⁶⁴ St. Hilda's Sunday School Teachers' Minute Book 3/5/69; St. Hilda's Parish Magazine February 1889.

⁶⁵ St. Stephen's Parish Magazine September 1898.

⁶⁶ East Street Presbyterian Church Sunday School Teachers' Minute Book 15/1/77.

Taken further such criticisms were to form the basis of the graded school movement in the early part of the twentieth century. By publishing lessons in advance, however, the churches made it possible for teachers to engage in some form of preparation before classes which, if well conducted, could serve to overcome some of the problems associated with Sunday school teaching. The importance attached to such work is best illustrated by Canon Savage's 1900 Visitation return:

everything depends on the continued weekly teaching of the teachers themselves. I have learned by experience to look on the weekly teachers' class as one of the very first duties and privileges of a Parish Priest's work. I cannot but think that the greatest need, and opportunity, of improvement in Sunday school methods lies in this direction - of the training of teachers

Four years later, Savage reported that he no longer retained the services of teachers who did not attend these classes.⁶⁷ In 1900 the class prepared a lesson on 'The Burial of Our Lord'; Canon Savage told the members to read Haskett Smith's "Calvary and the Tomb of Christ", 'which all the teachers have' in preparation for this.⁶⁸ Of course, the educational opportunities, wealth and leisure time afforded to teachers like the Misses Cay and Cottew make St. Hilda's something of an atypical school, but visitation returns show such classes in virtually all Anglican parishes in South Shields, though those in working class parishes seem to have been less well attended. At St. Mark's only one third of teachers were reported to attend classes in 1904; the demands of weekday employment were cited as the reason for similar difficulties at Holy Trinity parish in the same year. By 1912, classes had been replaced by weekly distribution of books, as at St. Mary's.⁶⁹ Yet such

⁶⁷ Visitation Return St. Hilda's 1900; 1904.

⁶⁸ Invitation to teachers' class February 1900, enclosed in Scrapbook 14/6.

⁶⁹ Visitation Returns St. Mark's 1904; Holy Trinity 1904; 1912; St. Mary's 1912.

expedients show that, even where practical difficulties intervened, attempts were made to maintain standards in the schools. Whilst undifferentiated lessons attracted criticism from the supporters of graded schools, the building of schools such as St. Jude's and the Ocean Road Congregationalists' shows that some attempt was being made to divide classes on a Sunday. The presence of day school teachers in some schools - the vicar of St. Aidan's reported in 1912 that most of his staff were day school teachers⁷⁰ - also raised the quality of the schools' work. At St. Oswin's, one trained teacher held the preparation class, thus enabling his/her skills to be utilised indirectly.⁷¹ None of this is to deny that the bible and the catechism remained the centre of most schools' fare, nor that concerns for a child centred approach to study appeared only late in the period. Rather, it is to suggest that attempts were made to maintain high standards of teaching during this period and that Sunday school teaching did not simply atrophy. Criticising the schools of the nineteenth century for not employing methods popular only in the twentieth seems rather unfair. Further, whilst bible study might have been the staple food of the schools, there was a varied diet of other activities too. Further examination of these follows some comments on the scholars themselves.

⁷⁰ Visitation Return St. Aidan's 1912.

⁷¹ Visitation Return St. Oswin's 1908.

Scholars.

Age and Gender.

Any attempt to establish who attended Sunday school is fraught with difficulties. The data is limited and there are clear dangers of generalisation not least because the scholars differed by denomination and location. The difficulty of establishing an age limit for Sunday scholars has already been mentioned, though entry from age five upwards seems to have been common, with most schools holding special infants' classes. Statistical returns suggest that the percentage of younger children in Methodist schools did grow as the period progressed, but the data fluctuate to such an extent that drawing any firm conclusions from this would be hazardous. Similar reservations must be made about any attempt to analyse the number of scholars over 14. Whilst churches like the Glebe Primitive Methodists record a fall in the number of such scholars; others, such as the Tyne Dock Primitive Methodists, show a significant growth. It seems likely that in some smaller schools, groups of scholars continued to attend together over a period of time, and this may help to explain such marked fluctuation in the numbers of scholars over 14 as is shown in the Hedley Hope Primitive Methodist returns.⁷² Certainly schools like the Alma Street Primitive Methodists, South Shields, with over a quarter of all scholars in the 14 and over age bracket 1903-14, give some cause to question the commonly held view that Sunday school became increasingly irrelevant as children grew older, though it should again be added that if the term Sunday school was being taken to include bible classes for adolescents this figure would be less surprising. One way of maintaining interest amongst

⁷² See Appendix H.

older scholars was to hold separate classes for them, a policy followed by most of the South Shields churches. Such 'select classes' were often a vehicle for teacher training as at the Ocean Road Congregationalist church, where a 1912 plan to use older girls to supervise infants classes provoked several scholars to leave the school. A special meeting of the lady staff agreed that any such work in future would be on a voluntary basis.⁷³ That the senior girls were to conduct such a class underlines a general tendency evident in the records; namely that girls seemed likely to stay in Sunday school for longer than boys. Select classes for girls were formed by the Zion New Connexion Methodists (1864), the East St. Presbyterian church (1867) and St. Stephen's parish church (1897). On each occasion, no similar boys' class seems to have existed, though the parallel reference to St. Stephen's Young Men's Bible Class again shows that boys may have been willing to stay involved in church activities provided they were not labelled as Sunday scholars.⁷⁴ South Shields New Connexion Methodist records for 1879 suggest that boys were, in general, less likely to attend Sunday school than girls. A minute analysing the loss of 55 scholars from the Zion school's books concluded:

The decrease seems to have been largest amongst the Boys, but from what reason it is impossible to say, on the other hand the girls have scarcely varied.⁷⁵

Whilst their own (albeit limited) statistical returns do confirm that boys were significantly outnumbered by girls at the Zion Sunday school in the 1870s, other records point to a more even balance between boys and girls in

⁷³ Ocean Road Congregationalist Church Sunday School Teachers' Minute Book 9/4/12; 11/10/12.

⁷⁴ Zion M.N.C. Sunday School Teachers' Minute Book 25/7/64; East Street Presbyterian Church Sunday School Teachers' Minute Book 5/1/64; St. Stephen's Parish Magazine April 1897.

⁷⁵ Zion M.N.C. Sunday School Teachers' Minute Book 15/1/79.

Primitive Methodist and Anglican schools. In some Deerness Valley chapels, indeed, the balance was, if anything, tilted towards the boys, though this may be a further reflection of the demographic trends in the villages, with girls leaving to find employment elsewhere.⁷⁶ In short, the limited evidence would seem to suggest that there was no significant imbalance between the number of boys and girls in Sunday schools, but that girls may have been more likely to stay in the schools for longer.

Social Class.

Writing in 1963 Inglis suggested:

There is evidence that they [Sunday schools] were attended mostly by working class children⁷⁷

The sheer size of Sunday school rolls alone means that a large percentage of the scholars were, *de facto*, of the working classes. Further, middle class children were unlikely to attend Sunday school, as the Rural Dean of Bishopwearmouth made clear to a diocesan conference in 1883:

I feel, however, that there is a great difference between them and the working classes, that their parents ought to be well able themselves to teach their children in their own homes...such Sunday schools [for the middle classes] would require teachers of great tact and skill, such as it is very difficult to find.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ See Appendix I.

⁷⁷ Inglis K.S. Churches and the Working Classes in Victorian England (London, 1963) p.330.

⁷⁸ Durham Diocesan Calendar 1883 xliv.

The incumbent of St. Aidan's confirmed the pattern of limited middle class attendance at Sunday school - and highlighted some of the problems associated with it - in 1912:

The well to do middle class, however, of whom there are many in the parish do not send their children to Sunday school, and among such children the absence of any systematic religious instruction, coupled with parental religious carelessness, is resulting in the growth of a generation whose lives are untouched by deep religious influences or experience⁷⁹

Such comments endorse the views of those - like McLeod and Cox - who point to the declining hold of religion over the middle classes during this period. Yet to argue that Sunday schools catered for the 'working class' may be too simplistic a view. Certainly there was a feeling that the day schools had a particular role to play in meeting the needs of the very poor in the towns - significantly Canon Savage reported that St. Hilda's day schools served those children who it was impossible to reach on Sundays. Recruitment for the 'Poor Bairns' Gala' of 1886 was from amongst the day - rather than Sunday - schools and when the East Street Presbyterians suggested that their school might institute a Sick Fund in 1861 it was rejected on the grounds that:

in general the children were of a class who do not particularly need such a society.⁸⁰

The Gazette's report of the S.S.U.'s 1905 Good Friday parade explicitly stated that:

The contrast between the smartly dressed, healthy and well-fed Sunday school children on one side of the Market Place and the poor, ill clad, half starved bairns on the other was painfully apparent.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Visitation Return St. Aidan's 1912.

⁸⁰ East Street Presbyterian Church Sunday School Teachers' Minute Book 21/11/61.

⁸¹ Gazette 24/4/05.

Given the widely held view that the respectable working class was more prone to religious activity, such a distinction in the Sunday schools should not be too surprising. The Rev. S.M. McLelland's comments to the S.S.U.'s teachers' convention which concluded the town's celebration of the centenary of Sunday school education in 1880 also hint that the schools had become 'gentrified' during the century:

It was good to have the neglected and ignorant children of our villages and towns gathered together into any kind of Sunday schools and taught by any kind of teachers, but it is incomparably better to have them gathered and taught into the circumstances and conditions of today, circumstances and conditions of which Sunday schools have been to a great extent both cause and effect.⁸²

Whilst it should be added that McLelland himself attributed some of the changes in behaviour to the effects of day schooling, it is clear that the Sunday schools were themselves actively looking to establish attitudes of respectability. This may have helped to exclude children from homes where such values were not the norm. Significantly, the report on the grand fete and parade held in North Shields to mark the centenary noted that the children attending were well dressed - even those from the mission schools - and that:

out of the whole number present there did not seem to be more than four or five pairs of bare feet.⁸³

⁸² *Gazette* 5/8/80.

⁸³ *ibid.* 22/7/80.

Prizes and Rewards.

Whatever the social background of the scholars, there is little doubt that the schools looked to inculcate patterns of respectable behaviour as well as to spread biblical knowledge. This secondary purpose was explicitly outlined by the Rev. G.R. Prynne in a pamphlet read to St. Hilda's teachers in 1870:

it is more important to make children obedient, modest, gentle and reverent, than to cram their heads with religious knowledge and Bible texts.⁸⁴

Scholars at the Wallis Street Congregationalist school were to be clean, were not to talk in school time and or to bring sweetmeats, fruits or flowers into lessons. Immorality or inattention to rules would merit an admonition; repeated bad behaviour would result in a special meeting being convened by the superintendent to discuss the case.⁸⁵ Given the limited sanctions available to them, however, Sunday schools concentrated on rewards rather than punishments to encourage appropriate behaviour and to attract scholars. The East Street Presbyterians' 1860 prize scheme, financed by collections amongst the congregation, was introduced at a time when the need to 'increase and revive' the school was under discussion; one year later the Zion Methodist New Connexion teachers set aside 6/- to purchase books to give as rewards to scholars who attended on three consecutive Sundays; St. Hilda's schools offered prizes to the first and second in each class 'who attended with any regularity' from 1866 onwards. Only in the rural isolation of upper Teesdale did the prize system come late, the Newbiggin Wesleyans voting in 1913 to

⁸⁴ Prynne Rev. G.R., *Hints on the Management of Sunday Schools* (London: n.d.) enclosed in St. Hilda's Parish Church Sunday School Teachers' Minute Book.

⁸⁵ Ocean Road Congregationalist Church Sunday School Teachers' Minute Book 26/12/47.

replace their traditional systems of giving books to all girls at the age of 10 to 12 and boys aged 12 to 14 by substituting:

a system of rewards for Attendance, Punctuality, Good Conduct, Work and attendance at Public Worship.⁸⁶

Within five years, however, the minute had been rescinded and the old system of giving books was restored. Reservations about giving prizes extended further than Teesdale. A motion to give punctuality and attendance prizes in the Ocean Road Congregationalist Church met with opposition in 1904, though it was eventually passed and concerns about the propriety of awarding prizes may have lain behind the justification of awarding prizes to 126 scholars published in St. Hilda's magazine for March 1893:

Prizes have to be earned; they are only given to those who have gained a certain number of marks, which represent a high percentage of attendance and lessons regularly said.⁸⁷

One reservation about prizes concerned their potential use as bribes, especially when this was related to denominational rivalry as reported by the incumbent of St. Jude's in 1912:

Numerous Nonconformist chapels in the vicinity have recently offered prizes and introduced a system of prize giving to children which we could not afford to do.⁸⁸

Prizes tended to be awarded for such behavioural matters as punctuality, good conduct and regular attendance as much as any attempt to measure knowledge. Attempts to award prizes for the quality of work performed by scholars seem to have met with limited success. The Rev. Johnson Bailly's

⁸⁶ East Street Presbyterian Church Sunday School Teachers' Minute Book 25/11/60; Zion M.N.C. Church Sunday School Teachers' Minute Book 8/8/61; St. Hilda's Parish Church Sunday School Teachers' Minute Book 4/6/66; Newbiggen Wesleyan Sunday School Committee Minutes 14/12/13.

⁸⁷ Ocean Road Congregationalist Church Sunday School Teachers' Minute Book 21/12/04; St. Hilda's Parish Church Magazine March 1893.

⁸⁸ Visitation Return St. Jude's 1912.

offer of a prize for the best 500 word summary of a quarter's lessons on the life of Jesus attracted only five entries in 1888.⁸⁹ In 1895, from a total membership of 8,677 scholars, the S.S.U. examinations attracted only 219 candidates though the advent of such external examinations served further to emphasise the importance of behaviour in determining the schools' own prizes.⁹⁰ The report cards sent to parents of St. Hilda's scholars listed a child's total scores for attendance and conduct alongside lessons; St. Stephen's followed a similar pattern and by 1912 the Ocean Road Congregationalists were awarding prizes purely for regular attendance, though the card scheme they introduced had the effect of discouraging some older boys from attending - presumably the scheme smacked too much of school.⁹¹ Entwistle's research in the North West has suggested that the books awarded as prizes by the schools served further to reinforce the behavioural patterns expected of Sunday scholars. They were:

used by teachers, acting *in loco parentis*, partly to convey secular moral messages, as a form of protection against undesirable models in working class children's homes and reading matter. In so doing they were probably trying to guard the more vulnerable members from the worst aspects of their own culture.⁹²

Whilst none of the books listed by Entwistle as 'typical' appear in the St. Hilda's records, there would seem little to disprove her basic thesis, though one might question the concept of a homogenous 'working class culture'.

⁸⁹ St. Hilda's Parish Magazine August 1888.

⁹⁰ Gazette 13/4/95.

⁹¹ St. Hilda's Parish Magazine December 1888; St. Stephen's Parish Magazine December 1894; Ocean Road Congregationalist Church Sunday School Teachers' Minute Book 11/10/12.

⁹² Entwistle D. *Sunday School Book Prizes for Children: Rewards and Socialization in Wood* The Church and Childhood p.415.

Titles from St. Hilda's also include more books of a general educational nature - an Atlas of Palestine and a Calendar of Nature were both awarded in 1878 - as well as the stories of moral improvement of the type discussed by Entwistle.⁹³ Given earlier comments on the social background of scholars - especially those likely to win prizes - it may also be that the moral content of prize books was less in conflict with parental standards than Entwistle's work implies. In short prizes were a useful way of attracting and keeping scholars and could be won by any child prepared to attend regularly and punctually and to behave in an appropriately respectable manner. In theory this excluded no children; in practice, it may have been a particular incentive to the children of the respectable working class.

Missionary Giving.

Missionary collection schemes not only provided money for church activity overseas - in Sunday schools, missionary committees discovered 'not children but a copper mine' - they also served as a measure of individual denominations' success and inculcated habits of thrift and charity amongst scholars.⁹⁴ The mission impulse is evident in dissenting schools throughout the period. The South Shields Congregationalist school held quarterly meetings 'to give missionary intelligence to the young' from as early as 1851; the New Connexion Methodists appointed a Juvenile Missionary Committee in 1866 and organised missionary collections every three weeks from 1870 onwards. The S.S.U. encouraged giving to support the work of continental Sunday schools, telling scholars in their 1882 circular to pity the poor Belgian children who had to travel five or six miles to attend Sunday school and sing

⁹³ St. Hilda's Parish Church Sunday School Teachers' Minute Book 1/8/78.

⁹⁴ Stanley in Wood The Church and Childhood pp.401 - 402.

hymns in English translation. 'Their boots are made of wood', the scholars were told, 'and they make much clatter as they go.'⁹⁵ Missionary contributions included home giving too. In 1884, of the £3:5:7 collected by the scholars of St. Paul's Presbyterian church, only £1 was given to foreign mission work.⁹⁶ By 1890 the children of the chapel had begun to make their own decisions about the destination of the money they had collected, voting on whether or not to give money to the appeal for the continental schools. By showing that thrift and charity brought some degree of responsibility, the schools further reinforced respectable values, whilst further limiting the range of Sunday school activities available to the poorest of the working classes.

Similar missionary giving came later to the Anglican church. Mr. J.M. Moore told the annual public meeting of the S.P.G. in 1889 that 'Shields did not do its duty to missionaries.'⁹⁷ Such reproaches bore fruit. Whilst a C.M.S. meeting drew only a 'meagre attendance' in 1870, the same organisation was able to attract a 'large attendance' in 1905 and whereas in 1882 the vicar of St. Mark's was able to declare his parish 'too poor' to organise a missionary collection, by the 1890s virtually all the Anglican visitation returns reflect missionary activity of some kind - sermons, collections or associations such as the King's Missioners whose role at St. Mark's in 1912 was to encourage missionary work amongst young people.⁹⁸ At St. Stephen's, for example, missionary boxes were issued to Sunday scholars in 1888 and a monthly

⁹⁵ Wallis Street Congregationalist Church Sunday School Teachers' Minute Book 25/12/51; Zion M.N.C. Church Sunday School Teachers' Minute Book 17/2/66; St. Paul's Presbyterian Church Sunday School Teachers' Minute Book 4/5/84. S.S.U. circular included in St. Paul's Presbyterian Church Sunday School Teachers' Minute Book August 1882.

⁹⁶ St. Paul's Presbyterian Church Sunday School Teachers' Minute Book 17/1/84.

⁹⁷ Press clipping of 19/11/89, enclosed in Scrapbook 14/3.

⁹⁸ Gazette 15/5/70 and 28/11/05; Visitation Returns St. Mark's 1882; 1912 and passim.

collection at children's services was instituted three years later, with children encouraged to take missionary magazines costing 1/2d per week by 1898. A contemporary juvenile C.M.S. branch ran on the basis that:

Each child is required to subscribe not less than 1d. a month or to give some needlework.⁹⁹

At St. Hilda's, concern about the lack of interest in overseas mission brought about the formation of a parochial branch of the Missions to the Heathen Society in 1891. Subsequent missionary work included support for particular disasters - such as the African famine of 1898 - as well as more regular giving. Here too, scholars were encouraged to take an interest in the destination of their giving, with a voting system which allowed classes a vote for each pound they raised during the year. In 1901, possible recipients included the Caledonia diocese, the Assyrian church and two girls in Zanzibar, as well as Church Homes for Waifs and Strays.¹⁰⁰ Voting implied some degree of education, and overseas mission giving gave the schools a further opportunity to extend their basic curriculum. At St. Hilda's, for example, Miss Helaine El-Baroody gave a costume lecture on Syria in 1899 and scholars visited a missionary exhibition in Newcastle in the same year. Over thirty years before, the Zion Methodist New Connexion school had invested in two maps of the Holy Land, again illustrating a breadth of educational activity in a Sunday school curriculum too readily criticised as a simple recitation of biblical texts.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ St. Stephen's Parish Magazine May 1888; March 1891; June 1898; January 1894.

¹⁰⁰ St. Hilda's Parish Magazine March 1891; March 1898; Missionary card of 3/3/01 enclosed in Scrapbook 14/7.

¹⁰¹ Scrapbook 14/6 1/5/99; 8/2/99; Zion M.N.C. Sunday School Teachers' Minute Book 13/1/62.

Extra Curricular Activities.

A wide range of activities conducted outside the classroom helps to explain the continuing importance and popularity of Sunday schools during this period and serves rather to contradict Meller's conclusion based on her study of Bristol that:

Throughout all the developments in socio-religious work in the nineteenth century, Sunday schools remained the one institution which was determinedly and dogmatically religious. Sunday schools, however, were never allowed to organise leisure activities on a regular basis. Their main contribution in this field was a passive one of providing a fertile recruiting ground for other youth organisations.¹⁰²

Yet even though Sunday schools did have limited time and financial resources, they did provide important leisure opportunities and activities at a time when day schools offered only limited opportunities in these fields. First and foremost amongst these was the annual trip. This provided an alternative to unacceptable secular leisure activities - both the Zion Methodist New Connexion Church and the Ocean Road Congregationalists held their outings on Race Wednesday, albeit 36 years apart.¹⁰³ Much like prizes, the trip also offered a chance both to reward and to recruit scholars. The willingness of some schools to allow non scholars to take part in trips may have undermined their function as a recruiting tool, though such a policy seems to have been more common in Anglican schools - with their mission to all children living in the parish - than amongst schools with a limited constituency such as the Presbyterians of St. Paul's church, who agreed in 1890 that no child who had not been on the school's books for six weeks would be eligible for an

¹⁰² Meller H.E. Leisure and the Changing City (London, 1976) p. 191.

¹⁰³ Zion M.N.C. Church Sunday School Teachers' Minute Book 29/5/70; Ocean Road Congregationalist Church Sunday School Teachers' Minute Book 19/12/06.

excursion ticket.¹⁰⁴ Non scholars provided income for Church of England schools, as at St. Stephen's where children unconnected with the school were charged 9d. to take part in the 1891 trip.¹⁰⁵ Such financial contributions assumed increasing importance as the trips themselves became more ambitious. In an editorial of 1902, the vicar of St. Stephen's summarised well both the value of the annual trip and the changes which this institution had undergone during this period:

The origin and history of "trips" would form an interesting study. The popularity of the practice is obvious and there are few institutions which do not deserve it. To children, who seldom see a green field, the day of the annual trip brings unbounded delight, and there are few who will not gladly subscribe to such an object. The only cause for regret in this otherwise most commendable practice is the somewhat ambitious character which Sunday school excursions have assumed. It is to be feared that there exists a foolish rivalry between schools as to which will have "the best trip", the result being that children are now taken long distances by train at great expense and at increased risk of accident. In former days scholars were content to spend an afternoon in some field outside the town, the attraction of the situation being to have tea on the grass and to play together in the open country. There are many parents who would rejoice to see the restoration of this old-fashioned school treat, but such an end cannot be accomplished until all schools are prepared to revert to it.¹⁰⁶

There is ample evidence to support the Rev. Mr. McCullagh's views. Early St. Hilda's trips were local affairs, not until 1876 did the Sunday school visit Durham for their excursion; St. Mark's Sunday scholars marched to Brinkburn in 1870; the New Connexion Methodists, having ventured no further than Trowe Rocks in 1861 agreed in 1877 only to have a trip if there

¹⁰⁴ St. Paul's Presbyterian Church Sunday School Teachers' Minute Book 18/6/90.

¹⁰⁵ St. Stephen's Parish Magazine August 1891.

¹⁰⁶ St. Stephen's Parish Magazine August 1902.

was enough money to run the school.¹⁰⁷ Outside the town, where rural surroundings made the annual trip less necessary, expeditions were a later development and remained limited in scope for much longer. The Teesdale Mercury, for example, first records a Sunday school trip in 1895, when the Rev. Mr. Milner, Vicar of Middleton, paid for the scholars to drive to Eggleston and Romaldkirk, and to have tea in the Lead Company's school. Amongst the South Shields schools in 1895, the Baring Street Primitive Methodist scholars visited Whitley Links, the children of the Baptist Tabernacle Sunday school visited Wynyard and the St. Stephen's trip occupied 18 brakes with 450 children and 130 parents and cost £22:6:9, £6:9:0 of which had been raised by public subscription.¹⁰⁸ Such trips were important events involving long term planning and fund raising - usually organised by the teachers and often involving public subscription. The patronage of local landowners was a further help - the Tabernacle school's visit to Wynyard, for example, was by kind permission of the Marquis of Londonderry, and coincided with a visit of the Duke and Duchess of York, who were 'heartily cheered' as they passed through the grounds.¹⁰⁹ Visits such as this further underlined the 'respectability' of the schools, with the young Baptists examining the grounds of the house as well as indulging in the games typical of all trips. At first these seem to have been of a general nature, a practice which continued in the more rural areas such as Teesdale, where as late as 1886 the delights of the Middleton P.M. Sunday school demonstration were thus reported in the Teesdale Mercury:

¹⁰⁷ St. Hilda's Parish Magazine January 1896; Gazette 8/6/70; Zion M.N.C. Sunday School Teachers' Minute Book 8/8/61; 14/5/77.

¹⁰⁸ Mercury 23/10/95; Gazette 12/7/95; *ibid* 28/6/95; St. Stephen's Parish Magazine August 1895.

¹⁰⁹ Gazette 28/6/95.

Talk about the music hall and the theatre - why, nobody who has attended or taken part in these edifying games can imagine how sublimely delightful it is to form a link in the kissing ring, or a pair in the fascinating game of "Sally Walker".¹¹⁰

The town Sunday schools seem to have turned to organised team games more quickly. St. Paul's Presbyterian Sunday school was obliged to pay 3/- compensation to the Hannay brothers (sons of the school's superintendent) for their cricket kit lost on the 1878 excursion; thirteen years later boys from the same school played football during the annual excursion.¹¹¹ Trips outside the borough provided opportunities for urban children to play sports impossible in the town where, according to a Gazette article of 1900:

Miles and miles of streets have been built without a thought being given to the question of providing facilities for the healthful recreation of the children who inhabit them. The streets are virtually the children's only playground and we know that is a state of things not at all conducive to law and order.¹¹²

It would be wrong to paint too idyllic a picture of these trips. They could bring their own difficulties. What went wrong on St. Hilda's trip to Durham in 1876 is not clear from the records, but it was sufficient to persuade Canon Chester to conclude:

Never go away again. Treat at home. Service in church. Tea.
Dinner if need be.

Perhaps the task of conducting 287 adults and 547 scholars around Durham - presumably viewing some of its history and culture - had simply proved too

¹¹⁰ Mercury 7/7/86.

¹¹¹ St. Paul's Presbyterian Church Sunday School Teachers' Minute Book 6/8/78; 17/6/91.

¹¹² Gazette 5/9/00.

much for Canon Chester.¹¹³ His successor faced a more tangible problem six years later, when one of the children suffered 'a somewhat serious accident' during the annual treat at Whitburn.¹¹⁴ Most disturbing is, perhaps, the Presbyterian resolution of 1891 which again hints at the existence of a world outside the respectable confines of the Sunday school:

From the experience of former years and complaints of other schools which had reached us, it was agreed to ask the authorities at Dunston for Police protection while at the field.¹¹⁵

Given such concerns, and the large number of scholars of varying ages involved in many expeditions, it was unlikely to have been a day out for the teachers (as St. Hilda's Magazine was keen to point out in 1896), but for the scholars themselves it was clearly an attraction and an important part of Sunday school life. When St. Hilda's trip was rained off in 1892 it was, significantly, the older scholars who urged the teachers to make a second attempt to visit Sunnyside as 'they had a holiday that day but had to be at work again on Friday.' Only the advent of greater secular leisure opportunities, with half day holidays and cheap railway excursions, undermined the popularity of this event as the period progressed. Before then the trip was:

no mere idle luxury or bribe for attendance at Sunday school, but...a real power to strengthen the *esprit de corps* which is one of the most powerful forces in a successful school.¹¹⁶

¹¹³ St. Hilda's Sunday School Teachers' Minute Book 16/8/76.

¹¹⁴ St. Hilda's Parish Magazine September 1884.

¹¹⁵ St. Paul's Presbyterian Church Sunday School Teachers' Minute Book 24/5/91.

¹¹⁶ St. Hilda's Parish Magazine August 1896; July 1892; August 1894.

Alongside the trip in the Sunday school calendar of important events stood the anniversary demonstrations. By far the largest in South Shields was the annual Good Friday S.S.U. parade, attracting over 10,000 children and 759 teachers from 30 nonconformist schools in 1910, with a further 2,000 children and 200 teachers in a simultaneous Tyne Dock demonstration.¹¹⁷ Such an event required planning and organisation on a substantial scale and its importance may be gauged from the regular attendance of borough noteworthies at the subsequent A.G.M. J.C. Stevenson M.P. chaired these meetings from 1870 to 1890. Yet if the Good Friday demonstration provided the shop window of the Sunday school movement in the town, the separate anniversaries of each congregation allowed the churches not only to raise money from collections, but also to underline the importance of young people to the churches' future in sermons preached on the theme of Sunday school work. Outside the town, anniversaries continued to play an important role as a community activity. In 1910 the Teesdale Wesleyan Circuit printed 400 handbills to advertise its Demonstration and this, together with the P.M. Sunday school anniversary, was an important annual event in Middleton.¹¹⁸ Anniversaries also gave scholars the opportunity to display their talents both in the recitation of pieces and as singers, a skill which the schools themselves looked to foster. In 1875, for example, the New Connexion Sunday school in South Shields provided 1000 hymn sheets for their anniversary services; the scholars of St. Paul's Presbyterian schools held monthly hymn practices from 1886 onwards whilst the Congregationalist school looked to form its own choir in 1905.¹¹⁹ Indeed, music played such a central part in Sunday school

¹¹⁷ Gazette 29/4/10.

¹¹⁸ TWC Demonstration Committee Minutes 3/6/10.

¹¹⁹ Zion M.N.C. Sunday School Teachers' Minute Book 12/7/75; St. Paul's Presbyterian Church Sunday School Teachers' Minute Book 2/5/86; Ocean Road Congregationalist Church Sunday School Teachers' Minute Book 18/1/05.

life that it took two meetings in 1909 for the Ocean Road teachers finally to agree on the hymns and music for their school.¹²⁰ Only the presence of children in Anglican choirs made the role of the Sunday school choir less pressing to the Established Church.

Music was also important in Sunday school entertainments. The scale of entertainments provided by St. Hilda's Sunday school may have been atypical - a plan for a children's concert at St. Stephen's collapsed in 1896, obliging the church to employ costly professional singers instead¹²¹ - but it does show just how important children could be as providers of entertainment. Coinciding with the arrival of Canon Savage, St. Hilda's Sunday scholars began a regular programme of shows. A December 1896 entertainment at St. Thomas' Hall involved songs and action songs as well as tableaux and mandolin solos by two girl performers. The second part of the evening consisted of the children's cantata 'The Glad New Year.'¹²² Advertised in the local press and with an entry fee of 1/-, such events demanded some degree of polished performance. Rehearsal for such events enlivened the staple diet of biblical study in the schools. The entertainments also performed a function for the churches by attracting a wide audience, as the Dean of Durham explained when opening a similar event in 1898:

The church wanted to rally all people to her. They must remember that the church was of all places the one where people of all rank, poor or rich, could meet together in common.¹²³

¹²⁰ Ocean Road Congregationalist Church Sunday School Teachers' Minute Book 12/3/09.

¹²¹ St. Stephen's Parish Magazine March 1897.

¹²² From a press clipping dated 29/12/96, enclosed in Scrapbook 14/5.

¹²³ Gazette 13/4/98.

The Gospel Temperance Union certainly used entertainment to attract a wide range of support from those not necessarily committed to church attendance and it recognised the attraction of young performers, organising a boys' violin concert which attracted thirteen 7 to 14 year olds from across the borough in 1890 and a concert by Juvenile Minstrels in the same year, for which:

The hall was crowded to excess and hundreds had to go away unable to gain admission.¹²⁴

Concerts brought in income as well as audiences. The Mile End Road Presbyterians used a *Kinderspiel* in 1895 to help finance their new Sunday school buildings whilst St. Mark's parish children's floral exhibition of 1900 helped to raise funds for a young men's institute.¹²⁵ The heyday of the Sunday school entertainment would seem to have been the 1880s and 1890s - secular leisure provided alternatives as the period progressed - but during that period entertainment was a central factor in Sunday school work. In attracting scholars too, entertainment played a role. The annual tea was a common feature in the schools, often involving a magic lantern show of either religious or secular content. Like the annual trip, these events not only rewarded children for their regular attendance, they also established the schools as institutions in their own right, offering activities beyond the recitation of catechisms or the study of biblical texts. Several schools also organised insurance and savings societies for scholars. The East Street Presbyterians also ran a death benefit fund, with clearly defined rules including fines for the non payment of weekly dues, though the school was obliged to create a rota of doorkeepers in 1882, whose task was to prevent scholars leaving after they had paid their fees but before school began. A similar society existed in the

¹²⁴ *Gazette* 4/12/90; 8/12/90.

¹²⁵ *ibid.* 4/4/95; 16/8/00.

Baptist Tabernacle church.¹²⁶ Such activities outside the towns were often in the hands of secular providers such as the London Lead Company or Pease and Partners. In the towns, before the advent of state provision, the churches were abler to provide welfare benefits for children through Sunday schools; agencies with a clearly defined structure, organisation and target group and with a role wider than a glance at their curriculum might suggest.

Auxiliary Organisations.

This section examines two direct descendants of the Sunday schools which extended their work into week day life: the Bands of Hope and the various brigades associated with the churches.

The Band of Hope.

Founded in 1845, the Band of Hope numbered over one million scholars throughout the United Kingdom in 1890.¹²⁷ Something of the movement's popularity in South Shields may be deduced from the membership of the town's Band of Hope Union. In 1870, 1800 children took part in its inaugural annual parade; thirty five years later, 2000 were present.¹²⁸ Whilst not matching the scope of the Sunday School Union's celebrations, the Band of Hope could clearly draw upon substantial support amongst the young people of the town. Recognising this, several congregations sought to establish bands

¹²⁶ East Street Presbyterian Church, Sunday School Teachers' Minute Book 13/1/80 and 12/2/82; Gazette 19/1/95.

¹²⁷ Gazette 19/2/90.

¹²⁸ ibid 17/3/70;14/6/05.

of their own. The Glebe Primitive Methodist Sunday school teachers agreed to form a Band of Hope in 1875; in the same year the teachers of the Zion Methodist New Connexion Sunday school adopted a sub committee report on forming a Band of Hope, though their failure to act upon it earned an admonition from the New Connexion Band of Hope Committee two years later. The East St. Presbyterians did not form their band until 1884, whilst the Congregationalists of Ocean Rd. formed at least three separate bands during this period, a statistic to underline the impermanence of many church organisations and their reliance upon the leadership of particular individuals.¹²⁹ Band of Hope work was not confined to the Nonconformist denominations. Whilst attitudes towards the temperance question were more relaxed in the Established Church, visitation returns show that attempts to promote abstinence amongst the young were widespread. St. Mark's, for example, had two Bands of Hope in 1904; Holy Trinity reported a large group, in which the clergy were active, in the same year.¹³⁰ The centrality of the temperance message in the St. Hilda's Band of Hope is clear from a membership card of the 1890s. Members were to promise not to take beer, wine or spirits and were to say a daily prayer in which they asked for grace to follow God and to ignore the temptations of the world, the flesh and the devil.¹³¹ In promoting the temperance cause, the Bands of Hope reinforced the respectability promoted by the Sunday schools. The message was preached to a similar audience.

¹²⁹ Gazette 29/1/75; Zion M.N.C. Sunday School Teachers' Minute Book 14/2/75 and 11/11/77; East St. Presbyterian Church Sunday School Teachers' Minute Book 5/10/84; Ocean Rd. Congregational Church Sunday School Teachers' Minute Book passim.

¹³⁰ Visitation Returns: St. Mark's; Holy Trinity 1904.

¹³¹ Scrapbook 14/5.

The close relationship between the Sunday School Union and the Bands of Hope is evident in the inclusion of Band of Hope membership figures in the Union's annual statistics in the 1890s. At St. Stephen's, membership of the popular Band of Hope had to be restricted to Sunday scholars in 1894.¹³² Reaching any more detailed conclusions about who joined the Bands of Hope is, however, difficult in view of the limited data available. Several bands were divided along gender lines, with boys and girls meeting on different nights of the week. St. Hilda's Band of Hope was reported to be 'well attended especially by boys' in 1889, but there are no other clear indications of gender balance in the sources.¹³³ There are, however, suggestions that younger children were more likely to be attracted to Band of Hope meetings. The St. Hilda's Mission Band of Hope was billed as for children over eight years old and in 1891 the parish magazine expressed a desire to form a similar Band of Hope 'for elder children'. Significantly, by 1894 the Band of Hope had developed into two separate organisations; a singing class and a Lads' Brigade.¹³⁴ The collapse of a senior Band of Hope at the East St. Presbyterian church in 1890 further indicates a bias towards young children in the work of the bands.¹³⁵

Not only did the Bands of Hope draw on a similar clientele to the Sunday schools, they also inherited - and, perhaps, developed - Sunday school models of activity. The temperance message was delivered in a variety of ways and was interspersed with more general educational and devotional

¹³² Gazette 5/4/90 and 13/4/95; St. Stephen's Parish Magazine October 1894.

¹³³ St. Hilda's Parish Magazine January 1889.

¹³⁴ Handbill (n.d.) enclosed in Scrapbook 14/6; St. Hilda's Parish Magazine January 1891; December 1894.

¹³⁵ East St. Presbyterian Church Sunday School Teachers' Minute Book 11/10/91.

themes. The children of St. Michael's Band of Hope and Mercy heard lectures on 'Faith and its influence on life and character' and 'Kindness to Animals'. This latter - central to the Band of Mercy movement - was also part of Band of Hope curriculum at St. Stephen's, along with Church History and Foreign Missions. On a practical level, the members were also shown a life saving apparatus which could possibly be used on drunks.¹³⁶ The sample of evidence is limited, but it would seem to suggest that those organising Bands of Hope were aware that children's interest could best be sustained by a programme which offered some variety. Music was as important in this respect as it was in the Sunday schools; perhaps even more so. The South Shields Band of Hope Union Brass Band made its first appearance (with £135 worth of instruments bought by public subscription) in 1890. Its importance was highlighted by the Gazette's 'South Side Notes' column:

The enjoyment a lad can get out of a brass instrument is something marvellous

The Union also organised a district Choral Challenge Cup.¹³⁷ At St. Hilda's, music was the mainstay of Band of Hope work, as the parish magazine reported in 1889:

We have a capital selection of songs and catches and the words being set to very taking tunes the children sing them very well and heartily.¹³⁸

Not only was music a means of delivering the curriculum, it also enabled bands to put on concerts - like that by the Baring St. P.M. Band of Hope, which drew a crowded audience in 1895 - and to provide entertainment for

¹³⁶ Gazette 31/1/00; Harrison B. Peaceable Kingdom: Stability and Change in Modern Britain (1982) p. 129; St. Stephen's Parish Magazine September 1897; April 1888.

¹³⁷ Gazette 23/7/90; 9/2/05.

¹³⁸ St. Hilda's Parish Magazine January 1889.

the wider community, as for the Parish Tea held at St. Stephen's in 1901.¹³⁹ Similarities with Sunday schools extend still further, with Band of Hope trips, annual parades, anniversary sermons and magic lantern shows. At the Queen St. U.M.F.C. chapel, the Band of Hope was the vehicle for charity work. It organised an annual Christmas tea for poor children, catering for over 1000 youngsters in 1900. In 1885, when the chapel's Band of Hope numbered 260, 700 youngsters were thus entertained. As in Sunday schools, a distinction was clearly apparent between those who attended the Band of Hope and those who benefited from its charity. Only in the interdenominational - and largely working class - atmosphere of the Gospel Temperance Union did such a distinction seem less relevant. Here the Band of Hope played an important evangelistic role, as Mr. B.O. Lawson explained in 1900:

Excellent work was done amongst the children attending the Band of Hope who had no church or Sabbath School connection and were not reached by any other organisation.¹⁴⁰

For all their importance, however, Bands of Hope were not without their limitations. There is a suggestion that their importance was in decline as the period progressed. The 1800 who attended the South Shields Band of Hope Union parade in 1870 were equivalent to 36% of the total attending the Sunday School Union parade of the same year; in 1905 the same calculation results in a figure of 25%.¹⁴¹ Both Anglican and Nonconformist sources report falling numbers, though fluctuations in membership are not uncommon in individual organisations and make generalisation hazardous. It is also true that in the more remote rural areas, the Band of Hope remained a popular

¹³⁹ Gazette 26/11/95; St. Stephen's Parish Magazine February 1901.

¹⁴⁰ Gazette 3/1/00; 2/1/85; 11/2/85; 24/2/00

¹⁴¹ *ibid.* 15/9/70; 14/6/05.

activity. Middleton had its own united Band with 234 members in 1893. Its 1900 Winter concerts were:

perhaps the best attended and most popular meetings for entertainment and instruction in the neighbourhood. The Band of Hope is a power for good in our midst¹⁴²

The development of commercial leisure facilities in larger towns like South Shields helped to reduce the Bands' value in providing popular entertainment. Bebbington's suggestion that the Nonconformist Conscience had ceased to be a factor in British politics by 1910 may suggest that the temperance issue itself had become less vital by 1914, though the strength of opposition to the 1904 Licensing Bill should warn against placing any reduction in temperance activity too soon.¹⁴³

Finally, there was an inherent weakness in the Bands' work, as the General Secretary of the Church of England Temperance Society explained in a Newcastle speech of 1898. Describing himself as a strong supporter of the Band of Hope, Mr. F. Eardley-Wilmot nevertheless pointed out:

the danger of allowing young people to leave the Band of Hope at an age when they were particularly open to the temptation of strong drink, with the idea that their temperance education was completed. That could only be guarded against by forming such members as soon as they left the Band of Hope into an adult branch of some kind.¹⁴⁴

The formation of brigades by the churches was, in part, a response to this issue.

¹⁴² TWC Temperance Schedules 3/3/93; Mercury 7/2/00.

¹⁴³ Bebbington D.W. The Nonconformist Conscience: Chapel and Politics 1870-1914 (London, 1982) p.50.

¹⁴⁴ Newcastle Daily Chronicle 20/10/98.

Boys' and Lads' Brigades.

The emergence of uniformed voluntary youth organisations on a military pattern is indicative of the growing association of the Christian churches with militant nationalism and patriotism. This process is evident in Anderson's work on the mid Victorian period, underlies Springhall's assumptions about the inculcation of conservative and conformist attitudes by youth movements in the atmosphere of 'moral panic' about young people in the 1890s and is made entirely explicit in Wolffe's assertion that, in Victorian and Edwardian Britain:

Patriotism acquired an edge of absolute spiritual claims which led it to the threshold of a nationalism that equated the cause of Britain with the cause of God.¹⁴⁵

Patriotism was certainly evident in South Shields. In 1898 St. Hilda's magazine reported its pleasure at seeing several of the younger members of the parish in uniform at the annual D.V.A. parade. A year later the infants from the parish day school put on an entertainment which included:

an action song, 'The Soldier's Life' by twenty tiny boys dressed in uniform and under the command of an officer of five years old

In 1901 the Sunday school entertainment took the form of a 'Boys' Patriotic Entertainment: The Future Defenders of the Empire.'¹⁴⁶ Bebbington points to the Boer War as marking a symbolic change in Nonconformist attitudes

¹⁴⁵ Anderson A. 'The Growth of Christian Militarism in mid Victorian Britain' in English Historical Review 86 (1971) pp.46-72; Springhall J. Youth, Empire and Society: British Youth Movements 1883-1940 (London, 1977); Wolffe J. God and Greater Britain: Religion and National Life in Britain and Ireland 1843-1945 (London, 1994) p.260.

¹⁴⁶ St. Hilda's Parish Magazine November 1898; December 1899; Ticket for 28/5/01 enclosed in Scrapbook 14/7.

towards Britain's overseas role.¹⁴⁷ In South Shields the Congregationalists voted in support of government policy in South Africa in a 1900 debate, whilst the town's Boys Brigade battalion organised a collection for South Africa reservists.¹⁴⁸ In the Established Church, patriotic attitudes were even more marked. Addressing the 3rd. D.V.A. parade at St. Stephen's church in 1898, the rector described volunteering as a righteous cause which enjoyed the church's benediction.¹⁴⁹ By sharing in a period of national self assertion - marked in the Deerness Valley, for example, by the burning of effigies of Mr. and Mrs. Kruger when General Roberts reached Pretoria - these churches also aligned themselves with the jingoistic nationalism of the period.¹⁵⁰ Not all denominations were committed to this militaristic agenda, however. No Nonconformist congregation in either Teesdale or the Deerness Valley formed a uniformed organisation and in South Shields the Primitive Methodists based their attitude towards uniformed brigades on the Rev. T. Atkinson's remarks to the 1890 P.M. Conference at Sunderland. He:

thought they ought to set their face against any encouragement towards subverting the principles of peace and spreading a war spirit amongst them.¹⁵¹

The denomination may have relaxed its pacifism by 1914, yet there were still no Primitive Methodist companies in South Shields at that date.

That emphasis on military matters which discouraged the Primitive Methodists is clear in the work of the various brigades. Amongst the Boys'

¹⁴⁷ Bebbington The Nonconformist Conscience p.120-126.

¹⁴⁸ Ocean Rd. Congregationalist Church Guild Minute Book 28/11/00; Gazette 2/4/00.

¹⁴⁹ St. Stephen's Parish Magazine May 1898.

¹⁵⁰ Chronicle 8/6/00.

¹⁵¹ Gazette 10/6/90.

Brigade Companies, both the 4th. (Chapter Row Wesleyan) and 8th. (Baptist Tabernacle) awarded prizes for drill,¹⁵² but the most clearly militaristic appears to have been the 1st. (East St. Presbyterian) Company. Founded in 1891 by the Sunday school teachers, it was formally enrolled in 1892. Three years later the members performed a march past, company drill and arms drill to music at its annual inspection and by 1908 the Presbyterian session agreed to investigate the possibility of creating a rifle range for the company.¹⁵³ The Anglican C.L.B. has been characterised as 'more conformist, militarized and nationalistic' than the B.B., its 1911 acceptance of territorial status seen as confirming its pursuit of 'military means rather than ostensibly religious ends.'¹⁵⁴ Evidence from St. Hilda's Company records would seem to support this. In 1899 members attended a North East District camp at Saltburn. This was 'carried out as nearly as possible on military lines'. Boys wore military rank and carried the 20 rifles purchased the previous year. In 1902 the lads engaged in military style manoeuvres; the Jarrow and South Shields Battalion defended Washington against an attack by Newcastle and Gateshead detachments a 'sham fight, thoroughly enjoyed by the lads.' One year later, the South Shields C.L.B. battalion discussed the possibility of purchasing a field gun.¹⁵⁵ Such overt militarism has enabled Wolffe to characterise brigades as 'blending religious, patriotic and military inspiration' and to suggest that they

¹⁵² Gazette 30/5/95; 7/6/05.

¹⁵³ East Street Presbyterian Church Boys' Brigade Minutes 13/12/91; 12/1/92; 1/11/08; Gazette 26/4/95.

¹⁵⁴ Springhall Youth, Empire and Society p.40.

¹⁵⁵ Letter of 1899 enclosed in Scrapbook 14/6; St. Hilda's Parish Magazine June 1898; Press clipping (n.d.) enclosed in Scrapbook 14/7; Printed card 1/7/03 enclosed in Scrapbook 14/7.

helped promote the widespread willingness to enter military service in 1914.¹⁵⁶

Yet brigade work involved more than inculcation of military values. Camp was seen as a means to take children out of urban environments and to introduce them to respectable and 'manly' pastimes through the medium of discipline and regulations. 'Without doubt,' an 1899 letter informed the parishioners of St. Hilda's:

the influence of a week in Camp is of incalculable value in the building up of the lads' character; it has been compared to a week of public school life.¹⁵⁷

Both the C.L.B. and the B.B. referred to the promotion of reverence, discipline and self respect in their almost identical objects. Military methods were seen as a means to a moral end. Both organisations also looked to promote 'true Christian Manliness', yet opinions as to the nature of this quality differ. In the 1860s, according to Anderson, military discipline was seen as a means of:

enforcing regular behaviour upon tough street urchins and [making] them more acceptable and trustworthy in the eyes of the public.¹⁵⁸

Given this, little other than physical activity would seem to have been required. Meetings of St. Stephen's C.L.B. company seem to confirm this. They consisted of:

one hour devoted to bodily discipline and the development of muscle, the other hour given up to recreation of various kinds.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ Wolfe God and Greater Britain pp.230-31.

¹⁵⁷ Printed letter of 1899 enclosed in Scrapbook 14/6.

¹⁵⁸ Anderson Christian Militarism p.69

A similar emphasis on physical activity appears to have prevailed in Esh Winning, where the local company was active in the Durham C.L.B. league.¹⁶⁰ A B.B. and Scout Football League also existed in South Shields by 1910.¹⁶¹ Yet the brigades were not simply a continuation of that 'muscular Christianity' which Meller identified in the Bristol of the 1880s. Even at St. Stephen's C.L.B. parades included reading as well as 'games of a more or less violent character'.¹⁶² At St. Hilda's, this tendency was even more marked. A scriptural knowledge prize was awarded in April 1902 following an examination and in the summer of the same year a competition in church history was also held. Whilst such activities betray the interests of Canon Savage, they also serve to support Gay's assertion that Christian manliness in this period meant more than simple physical prowess and was, rather, 'a quality far richer than we have long thought'.¹⁶³

It is possible to pick out some trends amongst membership. There would seem to be evidence to support Springhall's conclusion that:

Like the Band of Hope movement [brigades] recruited chiefly not from the very poor, but from the operative or artisan class - the sons of skilled workers¹⁶⁴

Attendant costs of membership were partly responsible for this limitation. The Saltburn camp of 1899 cost 11/6 per boy. Though the company officers paid

¹⁵⁹ St. Stephen's Parish Magazine December 1899.

¹⁶⁰ Visitation Return Esh 1904.

¹⁶¹ Gazette 2/12/10

¹⁶² St. Stephen's Parish Magazine November 1893.

¹⁶³ Gay P. *The Manliness of Christ* in Davies R.W. and Helmstadter R.J. (eds.) Religion and Irreligion in Victorian Society (Padstow, 1992) p.115.

¹⁶⁴ Springhall Youth, Empire and Society p.35.

half, the price must have served to limit attendance. Nor could companies manage large numbers of boys. Many activities required specialist adult help and were simply not suitable for large scale participation. The lack of such help could cause companies to fold, as could the lack of suitable premises - the St. Stephen's magazine could only conclude that its plan to build a designated drill hall in 1895 was 'a castle which it is hoped may soon come down from the air.'¹⁶⁵ Membership also required a significant degree of commitment and - perhaps most crucially - a willingness amongst older boys to serve as N.C.O.'s. Most companies appear to have catered for the 12-19 age group and St. Hilda's certainly attracted some boys over 16 - including a sergeant of 19 in 1902¹⁶⁶ - but the majority were unlikely to involve themselves in brigade activities once at work. Hence membership rolls were small - herein lay the significant difference from the Bands of Hope. When the South Shields C.L.B. Battalion paraded in 1902, the largest company was St. Mark's with 31 lads; St. Hilda's mustered 27.¹⁶⁷ Thus, whilst the brigades are of interest for the light they shed on various attitudes in the churches and as an example of an organisation which was able to mix younger boys with older adolescents with some degree of success, measured by numbers alone their impact is insignificant at the side of the Sunday schools and Bands of Hope.

¹⁶⁵ St. Stephen's Parish Magazine July 1895.

¹⁶⁶ St. Hilda's Parish Magazine July 1902.

¹⁶⁷ Card 31/1/02 enclosed in Scrapbook 14/6.

Conclusions.

The collation of statistical evidence to support contentions about the impact of the churches on children during this period is no easier than for any other aspect of the churches' work. Certain general comments may be made. In Teesdale, for example, measured by the number of scholars on their books, the Wesleyan Sunday schools were clearly 'in decline' during this period. By the same measurement, the South Shields Primitives enjoyed significant growth.¹⁶⁸ Yet in both areas, the changing fortunes of the schools may not be isolated from broader demographic changes which are much more difficult to trace. Given that the age of Sunday scholars could vary significantly, it is difficult to ascertain just what proportion of the population might be 'susceptible' to school attendance and hence to formulate any figures for the percentage of pupils attending. Further, names on rolls do not necessarily correspond with numbers attending schools, as the statistics clearly show.¹⁶⁹ Some of the data seem less than rigorously compiled too. It seems to have been common practice, for example, for Anglican incumbents to return the same number of scholars in their submission to the Diocesan Calendar for several years running. Holy Trinity schools thus recorded 930 scholars for 12 successive years 1883 - 1895. Changes in the census area further complicate the picture. Given all these caveats, only the most tentative statistical conclusions may be drawn. In 1890, for example, 7,580 scholars attended the annual S.S.U. Good Friday parade in South Shields. In the same year, the Anglican schools of the town recorded a joint total of 4,149 scholars in their schools. The 11,739 children thus occupied made up 62% of the town's

¹⁶⁸ See Appendix J.

¹⁶⁹ See Appendix K.

18,920 children aged between 5 and 15 recorded in the South Shields urban registration district in the 1891 census. This percentage figure may be an underestimation - there is certainly no guarantee that all scholars attended the Good Friday parade - but the figure does serve to highlight the absence of significant numbers from Sunday school activity. At the end of the period, the evidence is even more tenuous. The Gazette's report of the South Shields and Tyne Dock S.S.U. Good Friday celebrations of 1910 contains a figure for scholars attending which is clearly nothing more than an estimate, and no Anglican records exist for this date. Given these major weaknesses, however, the statistics do suggest that Sunday school was maintaining its popularity in the town, as the 12,000 reported at the parades made up 47% of the County borough's 5 to 15 year olds in 1911, compared to 40% who attended the Nonconformist celebrations in 1891.¹⁷⁰ Given the positive response to 1908 and 1912 visitation questions about the strength of Sunday schools from most of the town's Anglican incumbents, it would seem likely that Sunday schools were at least able to maintain something of their hold over the children of South Shields before the First World War. This is not to deny that the schools were beginning to be seen as outmoded in their teaching methods, nor that their secondary roles as providers of entertainment and leisure activities were being threatened by the growth of secular alternatives. Yet the continued provision of school buildings and the emerging clamour for better quality teaching both show that, to borrow from Canon Savage, as far as the churches were concerned 'the day for Sunday schools was far from over'.

The schools played a vital role amongst children at a time when their needs were beginning to be recognised as a matter of separate concern,

¹⁷⁰ Gazette 5/4/90 and 26/3/10; Durham Diocesan Calendar passim; British Parliamentary Papers Census of Great Britain and Wales 1891 table 23 and 1911 table 16.

witnessed by the contemporary establishment of the Mothers' Union and by the growing concern about the quality of much 'family life.' Canon Savage's letter accompanying his 1900 return described middle class family life as 'very encouraging', strengthened by family holidays as a united group; family life in the families of the better artisans as 'strong and united' with children 'all but universally taught to pray regularly' and family life amongst the slum dwellers as pitiable.¹⁷¹ Paradoxically, it seems to have been such children that the schools were often not reaching, though the very size of some schools, such as Holy Trinity with its 930 scholars, would suggest that some poor children were reached in this way. This would seem to have been more true of Anglican schools, with their mission to reach all the children of the parish, rather than just the adherents of their own church. Certainly J.C. Stevenson credited the mission schools in particular with attempting:

the difficult work of bringing into subjection those children known as "Street Arabs"¹⁷²

Such a role may have been less necessary after the onset of compulsory education, and the trend towards 'respectability' amongst Sunday scholars may date from 1870 onwards, though it should again be added that the location and denomination of Sunday schools seem likely to have had an important bearing on the nature of scholars too. A further role of the Sunday school concerns the opportunity for outreach it offered. At St. Jude's, for example, full house to house visiting in the parish was not considered to be practically possible, but scholars' homes were visited, just as they were at St. Stephen's.¹⁷³ Such visits were generally well received. In St. Mark's parish,

¹⁷¹ Visitation Return St. Hilda's 1900.

¹⁷² Gazette 16/4/70.

¹⁷³ Visitation Returns St. Jude's 1908; St. Stephen's 1904.

the Rev. Mr. Woods reported in 1912, he was only ever met with welcome in the homes of what was 'a very abnormal parish' blighted by 'poverty and shabbiness', as well as by the ministry of the Rev. Mr. Evans. In the same year the incumbent of St. Jude's reported that visits often persuaded people to attend church, though 'the chief difficulty is to keep hold of them.'¹⁷⁴

The effects of all this work on the young people for whom it was designed were not always readily visible. Canon Savage wrote in 1900, 'one is sometimes tempted to doubt the efficacy of Sunday schools as a permanent religious influence'; on this occasion the vicar of St. Hilda's cited the death bed story of a fifteen year old boy dying of fever who tried, even in hospital, to be bright 'as an offering to God'. His patience revived Savage's faith:

As he passed away I could only thank God for the Sunday school and its spiritual power.¹⁷⁵

In a strikingly similar fashion, Margaret Carr remembered her earlier work as a sixteen year old Sunday teacher in the Teesdale Methodist of 1949. She wrote of a pupil who also died:

safe in the arms of Jesus. The childlike trust, the implicit faith, the transformed countenance on Dora's face spoke volumes.¹⁷⁶

The recognition that Sunday school's effects may only be felt in the long term was a common one. Pastor Edwin Baker told his Sunday school teachers at the Wallis Street Congregationalist church in 1866:

We have nothing very special to report in the way of conversion of the scholars in our Sabbath school and their admission as members of our Church but we are not without

¹⁷⁴ Visitation Returns St. Mark's; St. Jude's 1912.

¹⁷⁵ Visitation Return St. Hilda's 1900.

¹⁷⁶ Teesdale Methodist no. 3, April 1949.

hope that there is in many of their hearts some good thing towards the Lord god of Israel and that in a little time it will develope [sic] into true discipleship to the Lord Jesus Christ.¹⁷⁷

Respectable behaviour based on biblical knowledge seemed to be a realistic objective for the schools. Certainly, any idea that they could become the nurseries of their various churches seems to have been unrealistic. In some ways, the schools were too successful in their work to make this possible. The activities they provided were attractive to children - or, if not, to those parents who encouraged their children to attend school. Yet this in itself posed problems. As children - especially boys - grew into adolescence, such activities quickly seemed inappropriate to them and, consequently, large numbers left the schools. As early as 1874 Visitation surveys asked Anglican clergy whether they were able to retain Sunday scholars after they had passed the leaving age for the day schools. The S.S.U. also faced the same problem, organising its own speakers on the subject of '14 - 18' in 1880. As scholars left, so the likelihood of their joining into full membership of the churches decreased, as Bishop Baring told the Diocesan clergy in 1878. After remarking on the small growth in the number of confirmation candidates since his last visitation, he continued:

but it still bears no just proportion to the increase of Sunday scholars. I would fain hope that the fruit of our thriving Sunday schools is yet to be gathered in coming years. The senior Sunday class ought to supply candidates for the confirmation class in larger numbers. Yet there is perhaps no portion of the diligent pastor's work more difficult and disappointing than his efforts to retain under the influence of Church teaching young persons between the age of 15 and 20 who deem themselves too old to attend a Sunday school.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁷ Wallis Street Congregationalist Church Sunday School Teachers' Minute Book 23/1/66.

¹⁷⁸ Durham Diocesan Calendar 1878.

Not only did schools seem inappropriate to pupils, they were also incapable of bringing biblical knowledge and a standard of respectable behaviour to a large number of children, whilst, at the same time, preparing limited number for church membership. In the light of such shortcomings, the churches were obliged to look beyond the schools for work amongst young people. The schools themselves often provided organisational models for work amongst such people and adults alike.

Chapter 5: The Churches and Adult Organisations.

Introduction.

This chapter investigates the various non liturgical organisations and activities provided by the churches for adults and adolescents above Sunday school age. The importance of such work to the churches is attested by the secondary literature. In York, 'all sections of the Church took part in the revival of parochial activities and responsibilities'; in Lambeth 'thousands' who did not attend church took part in church related activities, with the result that 'it is difficult to find a voluntary institution in Edwardian Lambeth which rivalled the churches in their social importance'; whilst in Bristol Meller has traced from the 1860s onwards a:

growing emphasis given to the need positively to attract people to organisations and institutions by offering them something more tangible than salvation in the next life.¹

Similar developments are evident in late nineteenth century Roman Catholicism, prompting McLeod to borrow the German term *Vereinskatholizismus* to describe:

a network of specifically Catholic organisations...intended to champion the interests of the Catholics as a body and to meet the special needs, spiritual economic or recreational, of every identifiable group within the Catholic population.²

¹ Royle E. The Victorian Church in York (Borthwick Papers no. 64) (1983) p.11; Cox J. The English Churches in a Secular Society: Lambeth 1870-1930 (New York, 1982) p.23; Meller H.E. Leisure and the Changing City (London, 1976) p.133

² McLeod H. Building the Catholic Ghetto: Catholic Organisations 1870-1914 in Sheils W.J. and Wood D. Voluntary Religion (London, 1986) p.411.

Rationale.

Why did the denominations put so much effort into setting up ancillary organisations for adults ? Expanding opportunities for leisure for all classes coupled with broader changes in society - especially in towns - convinced many in the churches of the need for investment of capital, time, manpower and resources to counter what was perceived as a threat to their vision of life.

This threat took various - often interrelated - forms and was subject to change according to variables of both time and place. Drink, however, was perceived as the major threat, especially amongst the nonconformist churches, where temperance activities were often a prototype for later adult organisations. The very existence of the Gospel Temperance Union in South Shields serves to illustrate the continuing hold of the temperance movement over nonconformity. Olsen has shown the growing influence of the cause in the Established Church, a concern recognised in the formation of C.E.T.S. branches throughout South Shields. At St. Stephen's, parishioners were told that:

Temperance is a handmaid to Religion...for it is surely an outcome of the spirit of religion. Its very character is self sacrificing.³

Even the Roman Catholic Church - whose ambivalent attitude to the drink question might best be illustrated by the Northern Catholic Calendar's 1898 advertisement for T.E. Chapman's Wine Merchants' "Very Fine Blended Glenlivet

³ Olsen G.W. *From Parish to Palace: Working Class Influences on Anglican Temperance Movements 1835-1914* in Journal of Ecclesiastical History vol. 40 no. 2 (1989) pp.239-252; St. Stephen's Parish Magazine January 1892.

Whisky", two years after the same periodical had recommended that its readers 'never drink spirits' - was active in promoting the temperance cause. St. Bede's listed a branch of the Confraternity of the Holy Cross amongst its 1875 organisations; Cardinal Manning preached on the evils of drunkenness in 1882 and from 1889 onwards a rosary was said every evening for the same subject⁴.

Yet by the end of the period the temperance issue occupied, perhaps, a less prominent place in the list of threats to the churches than it had before. Nationally, whilst the most significant reduction in alcohol consumption came after 1914, figures for consumption peak in 1875-9. Royle cites Anglican Visitation Records as evidence that drunkenness in York had declined by 1914.⁵ There are similar patterns in the smaller County Durham Communities where paternalistic employers sought to reduce intemperance.⁶ The effects of paternalism were less evident in South Shields, with the possible exception of St. Stephen's parish, where land was sold for building on the understanding that no public house should be built on it. As a result, although it was one of the poorest parishes in the town there was less drunkenness there than anywhere else in the borough.⁷ Four years later, however, the incumbent of Holy Trinity also noted a reduction in intemperance whilst in 1905 the Gazette quoted the Chief Constable's pleasure at the reduction of drink related offences in the borough.⁸

⁴ Northern Catholic Calendar 1898 and 1896; 1875; Notice Book 1 5/9/82; Notice Book 3 3/11/89.

⁵ Cunningham H. *Leisure and Culture* in Thompson F.M.L. (ed.) The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750 - 1950 (vol. 2) (Cambridge, 1990) p.329; Royle E. The Victorian Church in York (York, 1993) p.33.

⁶ See above p. 71.

⁷ Visitation Return St. Stephen's 1904.

⁸ Visitation Return Holy Trinity 1912; Gazette 9/2/05.

Clearly, the drink problem had not gone away. County Durham held second place in the list of counties with the highest number of drink related offences per head of population in 1911⁹; there was a growing concern about women and drink and the agitation over the Licensing Bills of 1902 and 1904 shows the continuing political and religious importance of the temperance question. But alcohol was by no means the sole threat to the 'churches' concept of society by 1914.

In 1890 the Gazette described gambling - and specifically off course betting on horse races - as 'unquestionably the national vice', ten years later an editorial cited it as the cause of more suffering and sorrow than even crime itself and recognised it as a social evil second only to drink; further, the incidence of gambling was said to be much increased over the previous ten to twenty years.¹⁰ By 1912, Bishop Moule was sufficiently concerned about gambling to ask a direct question about its extent in the visitation survey, with particular reference to the number of women involved in betting. The several responses which indicate a high incidence of gambling amongst women show the bishop's concerns were justified. A specific problem in South Shields was the public nature of gambling in the Market Place and in Victoria Road, in the sight of:

Hundreds of children [who] have just left Sunday school, but what is the use of Sunday schools if the police will not do their duty?¹¹

Not only was gambling poisoning the young and damaging family life, it was also ruining healthy exercise by its pernicious influence.

⁹ Quoted in Rowe D.J. *The North East* in Thompson F.M.L. (ed.) The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750-1950 (vol 1) (Cambridge, 1990) p.468.

¹⁰ Gazette 2/6/90; 3/12/00.

¹¹ *ibid.* 4/7/00.

Interdenominational cooperation against gambling was limited to the Protestant churches - the Catholics of South Shields held lotteries to finance their mission and in 1913 raised £97:6:5 from a competition in which competitors predicted when a watch would stop and, in return for a financial stake, could win the watch if correct¹² - but was nevertheless sufficiently strong to ensure that the Council did pass a bye-law against Market Place betting in the face of a concerted campaign by the book making lobby, which included a petition signed by 4-5,000 in 1897.¹³

Concerns about personal morality varied from the apparently trivial - in 1900 the bishop was informed that young men and women in St. Aidan's parish were often to be found:

with such questionable literature as 'Gaiety' and 'Photo Bits' which are not sold by W.H. Smith and Co.¹⁴

- to more serious worries about pre marital sexual relations. Of the South Shields respondents to the 1904 visitation survey, only the incumbents of the relatively gentrified parishes of St. Michael's and St. Aidan's, together with Canon Savage at St. Hilda's, felt that a fall from purity before marriage on the part of the woman was not common. Four years later, the Rev. Mr. de la Hey reported from St. Jude's:

¹² Notice Book 4 8/6/90; Notice Book 13 29/6/13.

¹³ Gazette November - December 1897 passim.

¹⁴ Visitation Return St. Aidan's 1900.

I can only say that I am appalled at the ante nuptial impurity. In certain classes it is the rule.¹⁵

In the smaller communities the churches seem to have faced a similar situation. In upper Teesdale visitation returns point to continuing impurity before marriage and to high illegitimacy rates, despite the London Lead Company's policy of sacking an employee who refused to marry the mother of a child conceived out of wedlock. In Esh, whilst few girls were 'deserted':

the marriage seldom takes place until the parties are driven to it. Public opinion (in spite of all the declarations and efforts to the contrary) seems to look upon "keeping company" as the German betrothal - the church service and legal ceremony simply sealing and confirming an accomplished fact.¹⁶

The relationship between behaviour regarded by the churches as unacceptable and social class has been long debated. Some contemporaries saw a direct link. Writing from the working class parish of St. Mark's in 1912 the Rev. Mr. Woods pointed to the damaging effects of overcrowded housing and common sanitary conveniences in back yards on public morality and concluded:

the root trouble is poverty, an almost absolute bar to reform

Twelve years before Canon Savage described home life amongst the very poor as an 'abnormal rarity'. Yet he also argued that such 'pitiable' conditions were:

¹⁵ Visitation Returns 1904 passim; St. Jude's 1908.

¹⁶ Visitation Return Esh 1904.

not from 'conditions of labour' or lack of wages, but from the prevalent drunkenness and gambling; particularly amongst the women.¹⁷

In short, immoral behaviour was a matter of choice - of adopting a particular culture - rather than something predetermined by economic forces. The idea that the churches' attempts to control leisure activities involved a conflict of cultures rather than classes has been long established.¹⁸ More recently Cunningham has cast doubts on the validity of the use of the distinction between respectable and rough behaviour as an analytical tool in studies of this period, arguing that the distinction confuses 'the history of moral ideas with the history of lived experience'.¹⁹ Some reservations hold true. Defining respectability is not easy. It changed according to variables of time, place and denomination; indeed, it was often a matter of contemporary dispute within church communities. In the broadest sense, it generally contained some of the elements outlined by McLeod in his revised view of the importance of religion to the working classes. This focuses on respectability as an ideal cutting across both sectarian and class boundaries and involving a commitment to self improvement, a rejection of immorality, a strict code of behaviour and a concern to maintain an independent economic status which rejected the financially draining and personally degrading culture of drink and gambling.²⁰ In theory all could aspire to respectable

¹⁷ Visitation Returns St. Hilda's 1900; St. Mark's 1912.

¹⁸ This idea is raised and discussed by Harrison B. in *Religion and Recreation in Nineteenth Century England* in Past and Present no. 38 (1967) pp.98-125.

¹⁹ Cunningham *Leisure and Culture* in Thompson F.M.L. (ed.) The Cambridge Social History of Britain vol. 2 (Cambridge, 1990) p.290.

²⁰ McLeod H. *New Perspectives in Victorian Class Religion: The Oral Evidence* in Oral History vol. 14 no. 1 (1986) pp.31-49.

behaviour - as Cunningham rightly implies, a respectability confined to the middle classes is of no real analytical use to the social historian - yet in practice the very nature of respectability made it difficult for the poor - and especially the unemployed poor - to achieve. The following sections will consider how far the churches were able to promote a respectable leisure culture in the communities studied.

Adult Organisations: Two Case Studies.

A detailed study of two church based organisations will demonstrate the time and effort devoted to combating these perceived 'threats' in South Shields. The case studies are St. Hilda's Young Men's Institute and the Ocean Rd. Congregational Guild. Each was a response to a similar need. St. Hilda's Institute was formed in 1868:

in consequence of a desire expressed by a number of young men, who for some years have been under the tuition of Mr. Bell in St. Hilda's Sunday school, that some kind of association or club be formed in connection with the Parish of St. Hilda for their benefit and for the benefit of others who may wish to join it.

In 1901, one year after its formation, the purpose of the Congregational Guild was described as being:

to increase the Interest of our Young People in the work of the Church which could also be used as a means for the introduction of others, not as yet interested, and thereby good work could be done.²¹

²¹ St. Hilda's Young Men's Institute Minute Book (henceforth Institute Minute Book) 13/1/68; Ocean Road Congregational Church Guild Minute Book (henceforth Guild Minute Book) 23/10/01.

The Guild's records show its unbroken history to the end of the period studied. St. Hilda's Institute, like many voluntary organisations of the period, underwent significant changes whilst retaining the same title. Here the focus is on the period from the Institute's formation under Canon Chester in 1868 to its amalgamation with the parish's Working Men's Club in 1886. Whilst the title and many of the activities of the organisation remained the same after this date, it had clearly passed through a distinct phase in its history and the union was in some senses a winding up of the Institute in its original form.

Membership.

Generalisation here is difficult. Sources are scarce and membership patterns varied over time. Certain comments may, however, be made, starting with St. Hilda's Institute. Amongst the eleven members who joined between 1879 and 1881 and whose occupations may be traced in the census were an architect's pupil, an engineer, a timber clerk, a solicitor's clerk and a lawyer. Whilst a bricklayer, a house joiner and a draper's apprentice are also listed amongst the new members, there are no references to labourers, factory workers or the unemployed. When one member did find himself unemployed in 1877, the occurrence was sufficiently rare to prompt the Institute to organise a subscription list on his behalf.²² Nine of the eleven members were born in South Shields and one of the others was from North Shields. Thus a limited sample suggests members were drawn from economically self sufficient, non migrant workers who might be expected to subscribe to church activities designed to promote

²² Institute Minute Book 2/10/77.

respectable behaviour. Annual subscriptions set at 5/- for senior members and 3/- for juniors in 1880 made support from the very poor unlikely.²³ Nor is direct participation by the wealthier classes evident in the records: their involvement in largely self improvement activities is not really to be expected. They did, however, act as patrons of the Institute. Of the twenty five households on an 1886 list of 'Friends of the Institute' about which information can be found, seventeen had at least one servant. Much of this patronage was exercised by women: only twelve of the sixty four named 'friends' were men. Such support may help to explain the striking success of the Institute's campaign to finance the erection of purpose built premises in Waterloo Vale in 1875-6. A sub-committee had approached 'the most influential inhabitants of the town' to ask for both their financial support and for permission to use their names on collecting books. A sewing class provided materials for a three day bazaar in November 1874 which raised the remarkable sum of £1026: 4: 0.²⁴ Even given the relatively high entry fee of 1/-, it seems likely that such a sum could only have been achieved with the support of a core of well to do patronage. The proceeds of what Canon Chester described as 'perhaps the most successful bazaar that ever was held in the north of England' made possible the building of a 32 seat lecture room, a reading room and a recreation room within the Institute complex.²⁵

Age limits for membership varied over time. In 1875 it was agreed that membership should begin at 15 and that full subscriptions should be paid from the

²³ Institute Minute Book 7/12/80.

²⁴ *ibid.* 14/4/74; 29/12/74.

²⁵ *ibid.* 29/12/74; 1/8/76.

age of 21. In 1887 after the amalgamation with the club, attempts were being made to attract more boy members, but within a year membership was restricted to those aged over 18.²⁶ However else the churches were to solve the 'problem' of adolescent support, all the evidence would seem to suggest that including adolescents in adult activities was not the answer. Members were active in defence of the Established Church. Blamed for causing a disturbance at a disestablishment meeting in 1878, they acted as a pressure group in local politics, agreeing to canvass the town (in association with other Anglican institutes) for the school board elections of 1883. Yet Canon Chester was at pains to point out at the 1880 Tea that the Institute was not a Conservative society and that it had Radical and Moderate Liberal members united in their commitment to the defence of the Church of England. Whilst it clearly suited the vicar to deny the charge of political partiality, the committee's rejection of a proposal to purchase a picture of Lord Beaconsfield for the Institute suggests that there may have been some truth in his rebuttal.²⁷

Membership of the Congregational Guild was originally limited to men aged over sixteen who were members of the Church or its Congregation. Associate membership was introduced in 1902 for Young Men who did not fulfil these qualifications. Full membership might be attained after six months at the discretion of the Guild committee if an associate attended the Church.²⁸ This relaxation did not change the nature of the Guild greatly. Records of those

²⁶ Institute Minute Book 7/12/75; 20/1/87; 1/12/87.

²⁷ *ibid.* 2/4/78; 13/12/82; 24/5/81.

²⁸ Rules, enclosed in Guild Minute Book.

joining the Guild suggest that there were fewer associate members than full members; that associate membership was more common amongst junior members (those under 21) than amongst seniors and that associate members were more likely to have been struck off the membership lists than were full members.²⁹ Most such removals were the result of failure to pay membership fees which, set at 4/- per quarter, again served to exclude certain groups from membership.³⁰ In short, the evidence would suggest that, like St. Hilda's Institute, the Guild aimed primarily to serve the needs of young men close to the church and not to attract those without any existing allegiance to it.

The Guild differed, however, in its attitude towards women. As early as January 1901 the committee had decided to offer a 'cordial invitation' to the ladies of the Church and Congregation to attend their meeting: six attended a lecture on the history of the microscope the following month. This was clearly a response to the reduction in numbers attending previous meetings rather than an attempt to integrate women into the work of the Guild. Women were allowed to attend lectures, but not ordinary meetings unless specifically invited by a special resolution of the committee. The parallel organisation for young women was the Sewing Guild, its activities largely limited to providing materials for fund raising events. The Guild did offer women Summer sessional membership, allowing them to participate in rambles and cycle rides.³¹ Whilst this was hardly an equal recognition of women, it did show a greater awareness of their need for access to

²⁹ See Appendix L.

³⁰ Rules, enclosed in Guild Minute Book

³¹ Guild Minute Book 16/1/01; 10/9/02; and rules.

leisure pursuits. Less sensitivity was shown to the needs of younger boys. In 1902 a delegation acting on behalf of 'the younger lads of the Sunday school...asked the Executive to consider the question of forming a Junior Guild'. Initial responses were guarded. 14 to 16 year olds were allowed membership for a trial period but, despite the fact that any senior member was given the right to correct misbehaviour by the lads, it was still felt that 'their conduct was not entirely satisfactory'. In July 1910 the Church Officers decided that the existing Scout troop was the appropriate organisation for boys under sixteen. As at St. Hilda's, a body whose origins lay clearly in the Sunday school had denied access to a new generation of Sunday scholars.³²

Activities.

(a) *Educational* - The Institute existed, according to its 1876 advertisement:

For promoting the Spiritual, Moral and Intellectual welfare of Young Men, by means of Lectures, a Library, Reading Room and Classes for Religious Instruction.³³

Such explicitly educational goals are compatible with an organisation which evolved from the Sunday school and whose beginnings were in a period which Meller has characterised as a witnessing a 'civic renaissance' in which the benefits of 'culture' would - it was hoped - eliminate some of the worst features of urban life.³⁴ The first classes held by the Institute were in reading and writing. Despite

³² *ibid.* 5/11/09; 30/4/10; 8/1/10; 2/7/10.

³³ Scrapbook 14/2.

³⁴ Meller Leisure and the Changing City pp.58-61.

the prizes on offer for reading, it was agreed - three months of its foundation - that the class:

might prove an annoyance to and prevent new members from joining the association.³⁵

The 1870 Education Act further reduced the need for such basic classes and allowed the Institute to broaden its curriculum. A drawing class had been formed in 1869 with the support of the Science and Art Department which was also to sponsor a pure Mathematics class. A phonetics class followed in 1875; there were ambulance classes from 1881 onwards and literary and dramatic classes after 1883.³⁶ Not all were well supported. By the mid 1870s classes were established only if sufficient numbers were prepared to attend (the quorum varies from six to eight) and French, English and shorthand classes, set up in 1877, offered prizes for attendance on the Sunday school model.³⁷ In 1876 membership of the Debating Society cost 1/- and only those who paid the subscription were allowed to speak; in 1882 a revived society was empowered to discuss non religious topics and to allow non members to speak (for a maximum of eight minutes) in extemporaneous debates.³⁸ The Institute library held over four hundred volumes as early as 1870.³⁹ Books, provided by - amongst others - the Pure Literature Society and the South Shields Free Library Committee, were vetted by a committee under the Vicar. Journals delivered to the Institute

³⁵ Institute Minute Book 14/7/68 and 6/10/68

³⁶ *ibid.* 22/12/69; 2/11/75; 2/8/81; 1/8/83.

³⁷ *ibid.* 28/8/77.

³⁸ *ibid.* 24/10/76; 19/9/82.

³⁹ *ibid.* 3/12/70.

included religious material (National Church, Good Works), vocational magazines (The Mechanic, British Workman), recreational material (Titbits, Fun, Punch) and both local and national newspapers. Lectures were organised both for their intrinsic educational value and as a means of raising finances. In 1884 topics included "Iona", "The Franks in Spain" and "Cardinal Wolsey". Each was delivered by a clergyman and the last was considered sufficiently popular to have been repeated the following year, alongside a programme of Shakespeare readings by members.⁴⁰ In short, the Institute did provide a valuable educational service for its members, targeted not only at general cultural improvement, but also - through its classes in shorthand and book-keeping - at vocational objectives. Religious topics were not the exclusive fare of the Institute's programmes, but they were present, their continuing importance to the membership paradoxically underlined by the 1887 debating society rules which forbade discussion of religious doctrine.⁴¹

Educational activities remained important to the Congregational Guild - a body which aimed to promote the 'physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual welfare of young men'. Alongside billiard and ping pong rooms, the Guild buildings of 1902 included a smoking room (open for social, instructive and literary purposes) and a reading room with its own library.⁴² Intellectual matters were catered for by a programme of lectures, debates and literary society meetings. Lectures covered a variety of topics, largely secular, but likely to

⁴⁰ Institute Minute Book 7/10/84; 10/12/85.

⁴¹ *ibid.* 14/4/87.

⁴² Guild Minute Book 20/11/01 and rules.

appeal to a nonconformist audience. Gladstone and Oliver Cromwell were both subjects in 1901; the Temperance question and the Irish question two years later. More overtly political were mock School Board and municipal elections in 1901 and 1902. A literary and debating society maintained the tradition of self improvement which the Guild had inherited from an earlier Mutual Improvement Class.⁴³ Times had changed, however. The onset of mass education had ruled out the need for the basic teaching originally carried out in St. Hilda's Institute, and even the lecture programme faced difficulties. As early as 1902 the literary secretary had:

strongly urged the necessity of the members showing their appreciation [of his committee's work] by their presence at lectures and debates

Despite this, the average attendance of sixteen was still 'far from up to the mark'. In 1903 the possibility of closing recreational rooms during lectures was discussed - presumably to eliminate a counter attraction - and four years later the Literary committee reported that it was running at a loss. Finally, in 1913, the committee agreed to admit women to all its meetings.⁴⁴

(b) Games, Pastimes and Entertainment - Games and pastimes leavened the educational diet of St. Hilda's Institute from its inception. The committee was perplexed by falling membership numbers in 1871 as:

⁴³ The Guild inherited a cash balance from this group. See Guild Minute Book 23/10/01

⁴⁴ Guild Minute Book 8/1/02; 4/4/02; 6/2/03; 19/4/07; 7/11/13.

your institution has equally as great a number of attractions in the shape of games and other amusements as it formerly had.⁴⁵

Draughts players were given their own room as early as 1869 thereby freeing the reading room for quieter pursuits. In future, the committee declared:

no smoking, draught playing, spitting or talking be allowed in the reading room and every person entering the room shall take his hat off⁴⁶

A chess tournament was held amongst members in 1881.⁴⁷ Quoits were played in 1879, though not without some controversy, both over the location and the behaviour of the players, which were said to be 'prejudicial to the interests of the institute.'⁴⁸ Such concerns did not undermine the popularity of competitive pastimes - indeed, the amalgamation of the Institute with the Working Men's Club in 1886 served to extend the range of 'Games' played by 1887 to include cannon and bagatelle alongside dominoes and draughts, chess and quoits.⁴⁹ Even before 1886 games were played for prizes under a handicap system. The skill involved might well be used to counter any charge of gambling, though such an argument was less applicable to card playing which the committee recommended be discontinued in 1885. Three months later a new committee unanimously reversed this decision. Perhaps the contemporary discussions about the Institute's future - largely initiated by Canon Baily - might be explained by this resolution though controversy continued as late as 1900 when Canon Savage's visitation

⁴⁵ Institute Minute Book December 1871.

⁴⁶ *ibid.* 5/1/69.

⁴⁷ *ibid.* 26/9/76; 6/9/81.

⁴⁸ *ibid.* 17/10/79.

⁴⁹ *ibid.* 12/5/87.

return explained that the Institute's successor (described as 'latterly a club for men and young men who are members of our various Bible Classes') had games of various sorts:

but not cards. One year I reluctantly allowed the experiment on the pressing request of the responsible committee; but after a fortnight's trial cards were finally excluded⁵⁰

Given that - certainly by Savage's 1900 definition - members of the Institute were men who might be expected to subscribe to patterns of behaviour approved of by the churches, the continuing controversy over cards suggests that - at least in the Anglican church - the boundaries of 'respectable' behaviour were by no means easy to define. A Dancing Class for Institute members was proposed in 1884 - yet for many in the nonconformist churches, especially in the villages, such an activity was unacceptable; it was, wrote Mr. Huddleston, Primitive Methodist Minister in Waterhouses, one of the:

pleasures that tend to arouse and stimulate morbid appetites and unlawful practices.⁵¹

Clearly Mr. Huddleston occupied an extreme position, but the accusation that organisations like the Institute were losing sight of their true objectives was a commonly heard one.⁵²

The records of the Congregational Guild show similarities both in the interest in indoor games and pursuits and in the possibility of conflict between the activities of members of church organisations and considerations of

⁵⁰ Institute Minute Book 12/10/85; 30/3/86; Visitation Return St. Hilda's 1900.

⁵¹ Institute Minute Book 29/5/84; Chronicle 2/12/04.

⁵² See below pp.248-251.

'respectability'. It was agreed to spend £30 on a full size billiard table in 1906, the costs to be met by a 2/6 share issue amongst members. Both a league and knock out competitions were organised.⁵³ A bagatelle board was purchased in 1904, though the popularity which that game had enjoyed in the 1880s seems to have been eclipsed by ping pong. As in St. Hilda's Institute, cards were played - indeed, the committee was willing to offer prizes for a whist drive if the Chief Constable told them this was legal - and dancing took place at Guild socials.⁵⁴ In 1910 the Guild committee criticised the church officers' 'indifferent and unbusinesslike manner' when they refused the use of the church hall for one such event. The fact that the social, which eventually took place in the Ingham Hall, ended at 2 a.m. might help to explain the officers' reticence.⁵⁵

Conflict between auxiliary organisations and parent bodies was not unusual. Defenders of entertainments in St. Hilda's Institute could reasonably argue that the organisation was merely trying to enforce its 1875 resolution that members should not go to the 'Alhambra Music Hall...or any such places' by providing alternative sources of entertainment.⁵⁶ These were varied. Monthly vocal and instrumental entertainments were held in 1877; two years later a Winter concert sub-committee was formed, following 'sharp remarks' when concerts had been organised without the full committee's approval the previous year. After union with the working men's club, 'free and easy' concerts were held

⁵³ Guild Minute Book September 1906; 16/4/09; 30/4/10.

⁵⁴ *ibid.* 15/12/05; 13/12/12

⁵⁵ *ibid.* 10/12/10; 14/12/10; 23/1/11.

⁵⁶ Institute Minute Book 14/7/75.

on a weekly basis, though entry fees were reduced to 1d. from the earlier 6d.⁵⁷ Some of this entertainment was provided by members. The Institute had formed a musical class in 1873, a Christie Minstrel Troupe in 1879 and a Glee Club - a majority of whose members were female - in 1881. An 1876 proposal to form a brass band seems to have promoted the formation of St. Hilda's Parish band, rather than a body solely made up of Institute members.⁵⁸ Such activities served as a source of income - both for the Institute itself and - on occasion - for other charitable causes. They could also cause friction. Quarterly Coffee Suppers were a popular entertainment for members who were allowed to bring one male and one female friend to take part in dancing until 11-30 p.m. The behaviour of some members at the November 1884 supper, however, not only obliged the committee to offer 3/- towards the cost of cleaning the school room after the dance, but also seems to have persuaded the vicar that something was needed 'to place the institute on a sounder foundation.'⁵⁹ The behaviour of members of a voluntary church organisation was clearly at odds with the standards expected by the church authorities underlining again that 'respectable' behaviour was capable of different interpretations even within the churches. It is certainly true that the Institute's attitude towards alcohol would not have found favour in many nonconformist circles. The annual Tea and Concert was an important money raising event (in 1873 400 tickets were printed and the evening produced a profit of £43:11:1)⁶⁰; it was a chance for the Institute to solicit financial support from

⁵⁷ Institute Minute Book 28/8/77; 30/9/79; 21/10/78; 22/9/87.

⁵⁸ *ibid.* 18/8/73; 17/10/79; 1/11/81; 13/6/76.

⁵⁹ *ibid.* 6/9/81; 18/11/84; 14/1/85.

⁶⁰ *ibid.* 14/2/73; 21/4/73.

the wider body of the church in the form of tables given for the evening; it was also an important recruiting tool. Given the high profile of the event - about one thousand attended the 1880 Tea, held in the Royal Assembly Hall⁶¹ - the willingness to allow intoxicating liquor to be served was a clear statement of the Institute's attitude to the temperance question. Whilst alcohol was prohibited in 1880 and 1881, it was restored (in the form of bottles of wine) in 1883 and was accepted as late as 1885, during Canon Baily's incumbency. Perhaps significantly, the union with the working men's club meant that the Institute took on a pledge of total abstinence; equally significantly, former Institute members were exempted from taking the pledge. Indeed, the abstinence pledge was scrapped entirely in 1897 in an attempt to restore 'the old life and enthusiasm' of the Institute.⁶²

The drink issue was, not surprisingly, much less divisive in the Congregational Guild than in the Anglican Institute. Indeed, entertainment per se was less important in the later organisation. Sport and outdoor recreation, on the other hand, had a much higher profile in the Guild's history than in the Institute's. In part this reflects the growth in interest in sport as the period progressed; in part it is the result of practical difficulties facing the earlier organisation. An Institute cricket club was formed in 1875, but found it difficult to find a pitch (the mayor was approached with this in mind in 1875). Kit was expensive (in 1879 members of the committee expressed 'considerable feeling' when asked to finance the repair of kit from general Institute funds) and the management of the club

⁶¹ Gazette 31/3/80.

⁶² Institute Minute Book passim.; 14/10/86; 5/2/97.

caused difficulties, with players concerned that non-playing committee members might hijack the running of the club.⁶³ The Congregationalists of a later period were much better organised. A football club participated in the Tyneside League, sharing a ground with the Westoe Methodists. Ping pong matches were also played but cricket again proved difficult to arrange.⁶⁴ The summer session did, however, feature bowls and tennis. Cycling and monthly rambles were popular, with specific rules and prizes for highest attendance at each.⁶⁵ Not only did the Guild organise its own trips and outings, it also provided members with the opportunity to make full use of their own growing leisure time with the 1906 purchase of a bell tent which was hired out to members at 6d. per head. This experiment brought its difficulties - in 1912 members were censured after Guild camping equipment was left 'standing on the beach for 13 weeks'⁶⁶ - but the venture into camping, like the 1905 proposal to form a camera club, showed a willingness to exploit changes in leisure activities to maintain support.

Conclusions.

The wide range of activities offered by the two organisations and the tensions over what was appropriate behaviour might both be seen to support the comments of those who regard ancillary activities as diverting the churches from their primary, religious purposes. Implicit in E.S. Densham's 1905 valedictory

⁶³ Institute Minute Book 16/4/75; 20/5/79.

⁶⁴ Guild Minute Book 8/8/02; 4/9/08; 4/4/02; 10/4/08.

⁶⁵ *ibid.* rules.

⁶⁶ *ibid.* 20/7/06; 21/9/12.

letter to the Guild secretary is the suggestion not only that the Guild may have drifted away from its original purpose but also that the variety of its activities was, in itself, a cause of concern:

One of the dangers to be guarded against in the future, and I know of none more harmful in its results, is the splitting up of the Guild into factions. I hope the members will try to be thoroughly loyal to all branches of the organisation and give their hearty support to each.

Mr. Densham's credentials - a member of the football committee as well as a former treasurer of the Guild - give particular weight to his observations and to his assertion that the Guild should be first and foremost 'a place where Christian character is formed and fostered.'⁶⁷ The same theme was repeated by the Rev. J.Q. Christian in his chairman's address to the 1914 A.G.M. of the Durham and Northumberland Congregational Association:

So I say, finally, that we must pay less attention to our dramatic and literary societies and more and more to our meetings for prayer and praise. Our entertainments will have to grow smaller and our devotional meetings larger. Our *conversazioni* less fascinating than our church meetings.⁶⁸

There is evidence that 'prayer and praise' had not been forgotten in the Guild which had its own Bible Class and services.⁶⁹ Returning to address the 1892 Tea, Canon Chester expressed his hope that St. Hilda's Institute would also 'maintain an essentially religious character'.⁷⁰ Membership was limited to members of the

⁶⁷ Letter to Secretary from E.S. Densham, September 1905, enclosed in Guild Minute Book

⁶⁸ Year Book of the Durham and Northumberland Association of Congregational Ministers and Churches 1902.

⁶⁹ Guild Minute Book 6/2/03; 11/7/10.

⁷⁰ St. Hilda's Parish Magazine May 1892.

Church of England who were to attend morning and evening prayer regularly and to communicate at least three times a year. - election of vice presidents was held over in 1879 when it was discovered that some nominees did not fulfil these qualifications. The election of Jacob Kossick - a Jew - in 1881 suggests that these stipulations may have been relaxed.⁷¹ Yet meetings continued to begin and close with their own special form of worship. At first, indeed, membership of the Institute was synonymous with membership of the Men's Bible Class and, whilst the two groups later drew apart, there was a clear overlap in membership between them. Under the leadership of Canon Chester, any potential member was carefully vetted by the vicar:

so that, if he does not know him, he may get to know whether he has a good character, or not.⁷²

Yet if neither organisation had lost sight of its Christian purposes, there was clearly scope for conflict with the sponsor church. The Guild's executive committee was obliged to apologise to the church elders in 1906 after members violated the Sanctuary of the church in protest against the Deacons' threat to close the Guild rooms.⁷³ At St. Hilda's, the amalgamation of the Institute with the Working Men's Club in 1886 came about because the Institute 'on its present lines of membership fails to command support or success.'⁷⁴ Several reasons may be cited for this. Baily certainly saw the Working Men's Club, established in

⁷¹ Scrapbook 14/2 1875; Institute Minute Book 2/12/79; 11/10/81.

⁷² Institute Minute Book 18/5/75.

⁷³ Guild Minute Book 5/3/06

⁷⁴ Institute Minute Book 27/9/86.

November 1883, as an attractive alternative to the Institute. This was more than the wielding of a new broom (Chester had resigned in February 1883) as the Club was qualitatively different from the Institute, with a commitment to total abstinence and a willingness to accept all working men, regardless of membership of the Church.⁷⁵ Its basic purpose was to offer an alternative to pub entertainment for working men:

Although the religious teaching in the place might not be the first element put prominently forward...the influence of the place fitted men to receive religious improvement and put them in the way of looking through the normal comforts that surrounded them to better and nobler things.⁷⁶

When Baily insisted that the club be allowed use of the Institute's rooms for its 1885 exhibition, the Institute committee responded by informing him that the clergy too would have to pay for use of the rooms in future.⁷⁷ At a time when Institute membership was falling (from 122 in 1874 to 60 ten years later) this was, arguably, ill advised. There were also signs of trouble in the Institute, not least at the coffee suppers. Some of the blame for this was laid at the door of younger members who, as early as 1877, were blamed for 'a great deal of disturbance' in the rooms and who were held responsible for the 1879 incident in which seven members threw:

some offensive matter in the fire of the smoking room whilst Mr. Vasey (the late secretary) was holding a shorthand class which was a nuisance and annoyance.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ St. Hilda's Working Men's Club Minute Book 7/1/84.

⁷⁶ Gazette 1/8/85.

⁷⁷ Institute Minute Book 24/7/85; 19/1/86.

⁷⁸ *ibid.* 21/1/79

Perhaps as significant was the apparent popularity of the sports and pastimes which were central to the Club, where there was insufficient support amongst 104 members in 1885 for a night class, but where the bagatelle board was open every night of the week.⁷⁹ In short, St. Hilda's appears to have moved away from an Institute offering self improvement and entertainment to a group of committed church members towards an organisation offering less cerebral activities to a wider target group.

Other Adult Organisations.

To what extent were the Institute and Guild typical of church sponsored activities for adults ? A thematic approach to activities is followed.

Self - improvement activities.

The popularity of broadly educational activities (lectures, classes and debates) in the early part of this period and their later decline is evident in all the communities studied. So popular were lectures in the late nineteenth century that even those churches and organisations whose target groups lay amongst the least educated branches of society were committed to their use. The Gospel Temperance Union organised weekly lectures in 1890 as did the Salvation Army.⁸⁰ Their lecture on 'The Salvation Army in India' in that year served to

⁷⁹ St. Hilda's Working Men's Club Minute Book 6/1/86.

⁸⁰ Gazette 9/10/90; 15/12/90.

underline the army's distinctive standpoint and to reinforce their supporters. A similar purpose lay behind the East St. Presbyterians' lecture 'Scotland and the Scotsman' of 1895 and the lectures on 'Irish Music' and 'Irish Wit and Humour' delivered to St. Bede's Catholic church as late as 1911 and 1912.⁸¹ Mutual improvement classes could fulfil the same function, though generally appear more purely educational in their purpose. Meetings discussed matters of geographical and scientific interest as well as current political issues. Here the Gospel Temperance Union was particularly active, discussing 'Land, Labour and Capital' in 1890 and 'Social Reform' five years later.⁸² The mixture of current affairs and self improvement made lectures and debates popular in the period 1870-1900. Addressing the North East Y.M.C.A. conference of 1880 Mr. R. Stephenson opined:

In South Shields the young men were second to none in the average of intelligence, and in the agencies they had to further the acquirement of knowledge.⁸³

Within ten years, however, the South Shields Y.M.C.A. found itself discussing the advantages of mutual improvement classes and correspondence to the Gazette two months later suggests that interest in such classes was 'very meagre indeed'.⁸⁴ The dwindling number of references to such activities in the local press might reflect a familiarity which denied newsworthiness, but it is also clear that attempts were being made to make educational activities more attractive either by the use of slides and magic lanterns - thus pushing lectures into the area of

⁸¹ *ibid.* 7/5/95; Notice Book 12 3/12/11; 15/9/12.

⁸² Gazette 6/10/90; 24/1/95

⁸³ *ibid.* 7/4/80.

⁸⁴ *ibid.* 16/1/90; 13/2/90.

entertainment - or by inviting women into what had been a male preserve. Ladies' evenings became increasingly popular and lady speakers were a particular draw, as the South Shields Unitarians recognised as early as 1880.⁸⁵ Certainly any attempt to develop a 'mass culture' was, as Meller rightly recognises, seen as flawed by the end of the period, as witnessed on the one hand by the shift towards entertainment in organisations, such as St. Hilda's Working Men's Club, designed to appeal especially to the poor; and on the other by the specialisation of bodies like the South Shields Church Workers' Union which organised *conversazione*, lectures on Church History and educational visits as well as its Sunday school work.⁸⁶

The trend was not limited to South Shields. It does seem that the popularity of 'educational' organisations lasted longer in the Deerness Valley, for example, but even there the formation of the Wesleyan Guild in Waterhouses showed an attempt to mix educational activities with entertainment. Like St. Hilda's Institute, the Guild had its own band and organised its own musical entertainments as well as lectures and classes.⁸⁷ For the Anglican church, however, educational activity in the valley proved impossible. At Esh Winning the attempt to form 'a specially church institute' failed whilst at Waterhouses similar plans were thwarted by the popularity of the lectures on history and geography put on by the colliery company's institute.⁸⁸ The refusal of the

⁸⁵ Gazette 14/4/80.

⁸⁶ Meller Leisure and the Changing City pp.130 ff.; for C.W.U. see above pp.179-80.

⁸⁷ Russell St. Wesleyan Church Waterhouses Trustee Minute Book passim.

⁸⁸ Visitation Returns Waterhouses, Esh and Hamsteels 1896.

Ecclesiastical Commissioners to finance the Rev. Mr. Wesley's plans to build an institute in Hamsteels helps to explain his lack of success; it also shows that the Anglican authorities were astute enough to recognise the need to invest money and time only where there was an opportunity and a need to be fulfilled. Mass education had reduced the need for mutual improvement which had been evident amongst an adult population denied the benefits of free schooling. Alternative provision of adult education also existed and given the churches' continuing interest in such activity - either directly through denominational schools and school board elections or indirectly through the patronage of religious individuals such as the Pease family - the need for educational activities could be better met by other organisations. Educational activities continued in the Roman Catholic Church which was denied access to such patronage and where such activities could strengthen religious and ethnic bonds.

Entertainment.

Provision of entertainment by religious organisations was a contentious issue. Contemporary sources support Yeo's suggestion that the churches, in their attempts to attract a greater percentage of the population, lost sight of their spiritual ends whilst concentrating on the means to attract support.⁸⁹ The *Gazette's* correspondence column carried several letters on the subject in 1891. In one, 'Observer' stated:

There is too much worldly amusement in the churches. The people do not want concerts in the house of God. There are Thornton's [a South Shields theatre] and the theatre for that purpose. In front of a chapel in Laygate Lane there are two boards, one to announce

⁸⁹ Yeo S. *Religion and Voluntary Organisations in Crisis* (London, 1976) pp.154-162.

the preaching, the other the concerts; but the concert board is four times as large as the preaching board. If a feather shows the way of the wind, this giant concert board shows the way of the churches.

On the next day, 'K.J.' stressed that the churches should be doing God's work:

Now what are our churches doing ? The great cry is, how shall we amuse and entertain our young people. It is a great mistake to think that concerts, entertainments and dramatic performances come within the scope of the church. Such diversions entail additional work upon its members, to the neglect of more important duties. The church has an abundance of work without resorting to novel and artificial methods to amuse and entertain its members.⁹⁰

The Minister of the Emmanuel Baptist Free Church, the Rev. E. Mason, was predictably forthright in his condemnation of the Tea and Concert held at St. Michael's parish church in 1900:

the programme of which entertainment was far from being in harmony with the high mission of that church. Are worldly songs, burlesques, negro minstrels, laughable faces, performing dodges etc. in keeping with either the dignity of the church, or with the high views of clerical ordination ?

Nor were Nonconformist congregations exempted from the minister's criticisms.⁹¹ Nowhere is this fundamental puritan position better exemplified than in the dispute surrounding the proposal to open a temperance club in the Deerness Valley in 1904. Mr. Huddleston, the Primitive Methodist minister, took violent exception to this plan which had been drawn by up local Christians and others 'possessed of high moral qualities...anxious...to help men live a purer life and to develop their physical, moral and intellectual being'. Huddleston's

⁹⁰ *Gazette* 6/1/91; 7/1/91.

⁹¹ *ibid.* 2/3/00; 14/3/00. See above p.127.

principled opposition to churches being associated with any form of entertainment was clear in his correspondence to the Durham Chronicle:

I have known many young men who were active workers in the church who have become infatuated with billiards etc. Spiritual declension has set in and they have been ultimately lost to the Church. Local preachers have lost all relish for preaching by an inordinate love of amusement provided at the club.

For men like Huddleston the solution to the pressing social evils of the day was not to be found in the provision of entertainment which was 'scratching about on the surface', but rather in genuine evangelical fervour and conversion 'going down to the subsoil of the evil' and which seemed clearly evident in the contemporary great Welsh revival.⁹² This dispute was partly inspired by personal factors - one of the leading backers of the club had earlier been involved in a dispute with the circuit over pew rents - yet at its heart lay a genuinely held conviction that the churches were engaging in activities inappropriate to their mission. Other critics doubted the efficacy of church involvement in entertainment and amusement. The 1912 comments of the vicar of St. Aidan's, South Shields summarise a not uncommon view in the Visitation Returns:

I do not think that it [the parish institute] is a great help in the work of the church. Participation in secular activities is by many young men thought to be a sufficient expression of "religion". An institute can be a great good, but great and constant recollection of spiritual values is necessary.⁹³

⁹² Chronicle 3/2/05.

⁹³ Visitation Return St. Aidan's 1912.

Yet if entertainment had its critics, it also had its defenders. Prominent amongst them was Sir William Robson, M.P. for South Shields, who praised the Y.M.C.A. in 1910 for tackling:

the question of how to keep the social and pleasure loving instincts of young men on the right lines - on the line that makes for the physical and moral health of man...the problem was how to deal with pleasure so that it would always make for good instead of making for evil...Ministers of religion had not always treated the problem with perfect wisdom. They had sometimes fought strenuously but not always discriminately against pleasure. The love of pleasure was not by any means a non spiritual instrument. It wanted guidance and character.⁹⁴

The churches sought to provide such 'guidance' by offering respectable entertainment.

Music was central to much of the entertainment offered during this period and the churches, with their choirs and musical instruments, were well placed to exploit this. In South Shields the churches' musical leanings were reported as early as 1885:

"organ openings" have not only been frequent in the last few months, but promise to be as numerous in the near future...an indication of the growing liberalism of feeling in the churches...and of increased musical taste among all classes of society.

Ten years later, the then William Robson M.P. told the Queen St. United Methodist Free Church anniversary tea:

There was a time, and not very long ago, when a good many Protestants used to look with jealous and suspicious eyes upon music...he was glad to say that the Methodist bodies were never

⁹⁴ Gazette 17/2/10.

like that...music [was] a great instrument to spiritual development and a powerful, perhaps indispensable, aid to religious teaching.⁹⁵

In 1910 the Local Gossip column of the Gazette recorded no better way of spending a Sabbath afternoon than under the spell of high class sacred music which was 'a welcome innovation in church life'. Performances like that of Stainer's Crucifixion by St. Stephen's choir were:

not in any way be regarded as a performance for the entertainment of the congregation, but as a devotional service.⁹⁶

In the Deerness Valley, music was even more important. The Esh visitation return for 1900 comments 'music has considerable interest' and the Waterhouses Primitive Methodist cantata performance of 1894 drew an audience of 80 who contributed a silver collection.⁹⁷ The competition between the Waterhouses Methodists over organ installation further underlines the churches' recognition of the importance of music in what Moore describes as 'the singing valley'.⁹⁸

The churches' interest in music was not confined to the relatively high culture of cantata and organ playing, however. Churches of all denominations recognised the value of more vulgar forms of music as a means of attracting and maintaining support for their activities. 'Nigger minstrelsy' performed by members of St. Hilda's Working Men's Club was advertised in the parish magazine of January 1887; later in the same year 'carbonised minstrels' appeared at St.

⁹⁵ Gazette 2/1/85; 16/10/95

⁹⁶ ibid. 28/9/10; St. Stephen's Parish Magazine March 1894.

⁹⁷ Visitation Return Esh 1900; Bourne P.M. Waterhouses: Trustee Meetings Minutes Book 17/5/94.

⁹⁸ See above p.109; Moore R. Pitmen, Preachers and Politics: The Effects of Methodism in a Durham Mining Community (Cambridge, 1974) p.115.

Stephen's church and at the Thames St. Mission a new negro temperance sketch was performed in 1895.⁹⁹ Such performances, coupled with the patriotism evident in the uniformed organisations and the effects of bazaars extolling the virtues of the Empire all helped to bring about the merging of religious earnestness with a wide stream of imperialist support discussed by Wolfe. Whilst the vulgar entertainments of the churches were not necessarily inspired by that 'raucous xenophobia in which the superiority of Britain was assumed, not argued', it is clear that by promoting this kind of activity the churches - or, perhaps more accurately, the Anglican Church - were sailing close to the wind of 'the culture of the music hall.'¹⁰⁰ Vulgarly of method could take other, less apparently contentious forms. The Gospel Temperance Union organised entertainments of all kinds - concerts by workhouse children and by the Alabama Choir ('a real negro choir'); a competition for boy violinists; concerts by church choirs from the town and even a ventriloquist in 1890. The popularity of the Union's activities is clear from the records. 700-1000 regularly attended Saturday evening shows in 1890; in the same year 'hundreds' were turned away from a hall 'crowded to excess' for a concert by juvenile minstrels. To the Union's supporters, the rationale behind providing entertainment was clear:

The question of counter attractions was receiving the attention of the church, Y.M.C.A. and temperance organisations, and was doing much to keep our people from intemperance and other evils.

⁹⁹ St. Hilda's Parish Magazine January 1887: St. Stephen's Parish Magazine July 1887; Gazette 29/1/95.

¹⁰⁰ Wolfe J. God and Greater Britain: Religion and National Life in Britain and Ireland 1843-1945 (London, 1994) p.224.

'A stray visitor's' report in the Gazette of 1890 repeated the message, describing a congregation which:

included a few men who would evidently be more at ease here than in a fashionable place of worship. They wore white mufflers and strong rough clothing...though there were others who were more respectably garbed and appeared to be regular chapel goers

An attack on secularists was greeted by 'loud applause':

It was rather a singular thing to see on a Sunday night a congregation thus demonstrating their approval of a speaker's sentiment [but] better than dozing off to sleep under a posy sermon.¹⁰¹

Other churches were not blind to the pulling power of entertainment, nor to the need to provide an alternative to growing secular provision. For denominations as diverse as the Roman Catholics and the Salvation Army musical entertainment played a significant spiritual role. Frederick William Faber, a chief proponent of populist ultramontanist, sought 'vulgarity of method' - rather than the 'calm sobriety and subdued enthusiasm of the Establishment' - as a means of winning mass support for his church. The May devotions at St. Bede's parish, with their elaborate processions and dress, were in themselves a form of entertainment, though clearly one with a primarily spiritual purpose. Whilst it would be wrong to equate them too closely with the billiard rooms and cycling meetings of other denominations, they do nonetheless show that the Roman Catholic church was aware of the need to provide some form of sensory stimulation in its worship, an impression reinforced by the 'Captious Critic's' 1898 Gazette article praising St. Bede's choir for its music and concluding:

¹⁰¹ Gazette 10/3/90; 24/4/90; 4/12/90; 13/3/95; 3/1/90; 26/2/90; 8/12/90; 25/4/10; 20/1/90.

There is a rich passionate note in the music of the Roman Church which is altogether wanting in the Protestant. Have you ever thought of that ?¹⁰²

The same recipe of populist devotions, uniforms, badges and stirring music was, of course, the staple of the Salvation Army, not only in services, but also in entertainments such as that of June 1880, which featured the preaching of the Happy Blacksmith along with music provided by an ensemble of double bass, fiddle and harmonium. Such methods were regarded with distaste by some including the Archbishop of Canterbury whose 1890 attack on General Booth was 'peeled down' by the Gazette to the accusation that 'Your drums and trumpets and public processing are Yankee sensationalism'. In contrast, the growing respectability of the Army in Shields may be seen from Mrs. Colonel Ogrin's 1900 address to the 'principal ladies of the town' at the mayoress' home. Yet even if the Army was becoming less vulgar, its recognition of the pulling power of entertainment - and especially of music - was not lost. As late as 1910 Bandsman Jopling had to defend the Army band against the charge of making excessive noise on a Sunday. Salvationist meetings - like the Catholic devotions of May - serve to illustrate the fine division between entertainment and religious activity. For the Army in particular, entertainment was a means to a spiritual end, rather than a diversion from it.¹⁰³

There was, indeed, a fine line between the spiritual and the secular in the field of entertainment and music. McLeod points to the importance of hymn

¹⁰² Faber F.W. *Essay on Catholic Home Missions* (1855) quoted in Gilley S. 'Catholic Faith of the Irish Slums' in Dyos H.J. and Wolfe M. (eds.) The Victorian City: Images and Realities vol. 2 (London, 1973) p.839; Notice Books passim.; Gazette 13/11/98.

¹⁰³ Gazette 27/6/80; 4/12/90; 6/4/00; 22/2/10; 2/3/10.

singing as a leisure activity - at home, in the work place, at the front during the First World War - a point further emphasised by the fictional (and rather tongue in cheek) account of 'Woor Geordie's annual trip to the seaside' published in the Durham Chronicle in 1910. Describing a large man singing 'The Old Rugged Cross' on the return train journey, the author mused:

Aa cudn't say whether he was in real earnest or whether he had been drinkin...By the time he'd finished the verse the swet was pouring out of him. He seemed to work hisself up to such a pitch. Talk about Sankey and Moody, this chep wud her made a good preacher.¹⁰⁴

Music was often central in entertainments which marked the major Christian festivals. Easter and Whitsuntide were popular times for teas and concerts in all three communities. In Teesdale Christmas saw annual festivities by the Middleton Baptists as late as 1911, though the Waterhouses Wesleyans in the Deerness Valley had concluded in 1894 that Christmas teas were no longer a worthwhile activity 'seeing that for some time past public teas on that day have been failures'. On the other hand, the South Shields Gospel Temperance Union organised 'alternative Christmas entertainments' including a Christmas Day concert in 1905.¹⁰⁵ Entertainments on these great festivals were not exclusively spiritual in content as the churches recognised that entertainment per se was a good means to attract into their orbit those who might not otherwise attend services.

Entertainment served other purposes too. It could reinforce denominational and ethnic identity. The programme of Scottish entertainment at the Mile End

¹⁰⁴ McLeod New Perspectives p.35; Chronicle 12/8/10; 19/8/10.

¹⁰⁵ Mercury 27/12/11; Russell St. Wesleyan Waterhouses Trustees Minute Book 8/11/94; Gazette 36/12/05.

Rd. Presbyterian church's 1890 *soiree* was as important in this respect as were the Irish airs sung at St. Bede's Whit. Monday gathering five years before - an event which significantly preceded a political meeting on the Irish land question at which nationalist songs were sung.¹⁰⁶ Entertainment was also a means of raising finance, not only for the churches and their associated activities, but also for charitable purposes. It could also serve to unite congregations in fellowship, though careful management was required to prevent atomisation of congregations into different interest groups. Mr. Densham's warnings against the creation of factions amongst the Ocean Road Congregationalists are echoed by Yeo's suggestion that the Reading churches' attempts to attract particular class, age and occupational groups made it difficult to achieve ideals of social unity and brotherhood.¹⁰⁷ The Established Church in South Shields seems to have tried to counter this problem by the development of 'whole church' activities. St. Hilda's 'At Homes', were specifically designed 'to break down this isolation of units and to draw all those who attend the same church as closely together as possible.'¹⁰⁸ Elsewhere the problem was less acute. In Holy Trinity parish brotherly fellowship was decidedly marked in parochial meetings of different sorts amongst a congregation largely from one class; a similar situation was reported at both St. Mary's and St. Jude's.¹⁰⁹ In such parishes entertainment served to strengthen existing links within congregations which at St. Hilda's it was aimed to create.

¹⁰⁶ Gazette 26/11/90; 26/5/85.

¹⁰⁷ Yeo Religion and Voluntary Organisations pp.177-179

¹⁰⁸ St. Hilda's Parish Magazine January 1899; See above p.115

¹⁰⁹ Visitation Returns Holy Trinity; St. Mary; St. Jude 1900.

There is evidence to suggest that the churches' role as provider of entertainment was in decline as the period progressed. Not only were there new commercial facilities for leisure, there was also a trend towards a new type of leisure culture. Changing trends are evident, for example, in the Deerness Valley where the paternalist provision of leisure facilities by Pease and Partners was gradually eclipsed by a secular culture which established itself as the communities became more settled and which was not always so clearly in alignment with the churches' aims as the Peases' efforts had been. The annual Waterhouses Flower Show, for example, which was directly sponsored by the company, reported a fall in entries in 1905; in the same year the second annual show of the Waterhouses and Esh Fur and Feather Society - held in the Stag's Head Hotel at Esh - reported a significant increase in entries. The Waterhouses and Esh Working Men's Club, attacked as a 'life destroying plague' by Archdeacon in 1905, mustered the support of 1550 people for a trip to Saltburn in 1910 'without doubt the largest excursion ever dispatched from Waterhouses station.'¹¹⁰ In Teesdale, the Middleton Cricket Club organised entertainment for the 1905 Bank Holiday. Even in the musical sphere, so long the preserve of the churches, the Middleton Town Band organised its own concerts - drawing criticism for playing on Sundays in 1886 - and ran its own sports day in 1911, featuring a parade by the fancy dress 'blether band' marching behind the somewhat irreverent banner 'Young Spennymoor Suns of Temper Ones.'¹¹¹ Whilst such organisations need not necessarily have come into conflict with the churches in either valley, they do

¹¹⁰ Chronicle 10/2/05; 11/8/05; 3/3/05; 22/7/10.

¹¹¹ Mercury 2/8/05; 9/6/86; 9/8/11.

show that religious bodies faced growing competition from other voluntary organisations in the provision of entertainment.

Sport.

The churches' involvement in sport was a product of the general enthusiasm for organised sport summarised by the Gazette in 1885:

There is an increasing need of facilities being provided for physical education, so that our youth may not only have a healthy mind but also a healthy body.¹¹²

Arguments to support church activity in sport mirror the justifications for providing entertainment. Sport was a popular activity which would attract people - especially young men - to the church. It could forge strong bonds between such men and the clergy. The appointment of Canon Bilbrough to the living of St. Hilda's in 1904 drew several references to his prowess as a rugby three quarter and his all round athletic ability during his earlier curacy at St. Mary's. The story of his diving into the river to save the life of a Sunday school pupil (for which he won the Royal Humane Society Medal) enjoyed particular prominence. Bilbrough was later to become first President of St. Hilda's Hockey Club.¹¹³ As ever, there were dissenting voices. The Rev. Canon Gray warned the Diocesan Conference at Durham in 1880 of the dangers of clergy participation in sport:

I doubt much if a sermon on Sunday does not lose some of its power if the preacher on the Saturday, to the great grief of his side, has missed more than one easy catch.¹¹⁴

¹¹² Gazette 1/9/85.

¹¹³ *ibid.* 21/7/04; 14/7/10.

¹¹⁴ Durham Diocesan Calendar 1880.

Yet promoters of sport within the churches could argue that they were able to counteract those pernicious influences which, it was widely agreed, were ruining sport. As early as 1870 J.C. Stevenson M.P. had warned the town's swimming club to be wary of the corrupting influence of gambling in sport and to eschew that betting which had already 'vitiating many other institutions' and in 1890 Bishop Westcott encouraged Anglican churches to involve themselves in popular amusements, to counter the influence of:

cruel sports, gambling and the like which are perversions of instincts which must be disciplined and satisfied.¹¹⁵

The development of professional sport further threatened that 'pure amateurism' which, according to the *Gazette's* 1895 editorial, 'is and must be the backbone and mainstay of all true sport' and created a new class - the paying spectator - a group criticised by the Rev. Mr. Morris in his 1900 visitation return for 'crowding to see games rather than to participate.'¹¹⁶ Such comments underline the moral value which the churches perceived in properly organised and conducted participant sport. Muscular Christianity was important in the churches' thinking and in broader perceptions of their work. In 1910 the *Gazette* published a verse about Sidney Anstruther, a mythical curate who rescued a parish girl from the unwanted attentions of the ruffian William. Anstruther's qualifications as a muscular Christian were impeccable:

When up at College he had stroked,
The Oxford boat from Putney.

¹¹⁵ *Gazette* 5/8/70; *Chronicle* 26/12/90.

¹¹⁶ *Chronicle* 7/9/95; *Visitation Returns* St. Thomas 1900.

At football too he'd got his blue,
His fist was leg - of - muttoney

and his bravery and chivalry in rescuing the girl by punching William not only enhanced his reputation, but served an evangelical purpose:

Thus did the Reverend Sidney gain,
His parish's affection.
His church is crammed and packed and jammed,
(Bill takes up the collection).¹¹⁷

Canon Bilbrough's sporting qualifications may have been less pugilistic than his fictional colleague's, but they were clearly an important part of his public profile. South Shields Y.M.C.A. was similarly identified with sporting matters. The association was not entirely dominated by sport. Its 1890 annual meeting heard reports on a debating and shorthand classes, a temperance society, a penny savings bank, an I.B.R.A. branch and a 251 volume library, as well as its own newspaper. It was, however, the Y.M.C.A. rugby football club which had made headlines in the same year by winning the County Durham Junior Cup in a fixture watched by 6,000 fans at the Durham City ground, a success which prompted the Gazette to describe the Y.M.C.A. as the senior club in the town, eclipsing Westoe F.C. The association also ran a cricket and cycling club in 1890; five years later a swimming and junior soccer club were active and by 1900 the Association had its own gymnasium. Ten years later the Y.M.C.A. moved into new premises in Fowler St. Built at a cost of £7,500 they included a new gymnasium - with its own showers - and a billiards and recreation room.¹¹⁸ To

¹¹⁷ Gazette 3/7/10

¹¹⁸ *ibid.* 11/10/90; 24/2/90; 27/4/95; 25/6/95; 2/5/00.

see the Y.M.C.A. as the sporting equivalent of the G.T.U.'s entertainment provision would be to underestimate the range of activities offered by both groups, but it is clear that sport was central to its work. The Y.M.C.A. enjoyed important patronage from local worthies across denominations. At the opening of the new buildings in 1910 there were speeches by James Kirkley who had given £500 to the project; by the Rev. Metcalf Grey, Congregationalist Minister and by Sir William Robson M.P. Only a delayed train prevented the Bishop of Durham from joining the Mayor of South Shields at the event.¹¹⁹ At the heart of this support lay the association's ability to harness sporting endeavour to a Christian ethic, as Alderman Hunter of Wallsend explained at the 1910 opening celebrations:

In the present age there was not much fear of young men failing to find the means for recreation, social and physical...there was nothing to object to in a billiard room, but there was such a thing as having too much billiards. Football was an excellent form of physical recreation, no doubt, but some of them would perhaps agree that we had too much football. A Y.M.C.A. would not prosper in the highest sense unless it encouraged a good Christian work outside.¹²⁰

Sport was also a vehicle for that marriage of diffusive Christianity and jingoistic nationalism which is central to Wolffe's analysis of the churches' work during this period. Nowhere is this more clearly evident than in G.R. Potts's address to the victorious Y.M.C.A. rugby players of 1890:

Athletics were the backbone of the British Empire. There was no race under the sun that enjoyed manly pastimes more than

¹¹⁹ *Gazette* 17/2/10; For James Kirkley, see above p.90

¹²⁰ *Gazette* 17/2/10.

Englishmen, and if they wanted to keep up their health and strength, nothing was better than good manly exercise.¹²¹

With such intentions church sponsored sport in South Shields flowered during this period. Indeed, by 1910 there was a Tyneside Church Football League of two divisions. Several denominations had cricket elevens, some had rugby teams and St. John's Presbyterian Church - like St. Hilda's - had a hockey eleven.

In the rural areas, however, sport was not so important to church work. This partly reflects the continuation of older leisure pastimes such as angling and hunting - or poaching - in areas like upper Teesdale. Knurr and spell was revived in Middleton as late as 1890.¹²² Rural isolation made competitive fixtures difficult too. Yet organised team sport did develop in the dale during this period. Middleton had cricket and football clubs by the turn of the century; secular, voluntary organisations with their own adherents, capable of mobilising support independent of the churches (as, for example, the football club's 1911 dance in aid of a player who had broken his leg during a fixture) and, at times, in opposition to the churches' wishes, most notably if playing Sunday fixtures, condemned by the Mercury in 1900 as likely to cause football to fall into discredit.¹²³ A similar pattern of limited church involvement in sport is evident in the Deerness Valley. Whilst paternalistic coal companies whose objectives were not dissimilar to the churches' provided both facilities and financial support for

¹²¹ Wolfe God and Greater Britain passim.; Gazette 10/5/90.

¹²² Mercury 21/1/90.

¹²³ *ibid.* 18/1/11; 14/11/00.

sporting activities in the villages, there is some suggestion that the clubs developed a more independent life as the period progressed. Meetings took place in public houses - Esh Winning Cricket Club held a 1910 fund raising social at the Station Hotel - and the clubs themselves were represented independently on public occasions such as the funeral of Thomas Pinkney, a former player, where the procession was headed by the committee and players of Esh Rangers F.C.¹²⁴

Yet if church provision of sport in the valleys was limited, within South Shields itself it was an important facet of churches' work. They responded to the growing popularity of sport and the greater provision of leisure time for urban workers by sponsoring sporting activities of all kinds. Provided these were properly regulated, they were seen as morally worthwhile and thus not subject to some of the criticisms levelled at church sponsored entertainments. Whilst some did argue that churches might become more concerned with sport than with their evangelical message, most accepted the value of sport and looked to ensure that it was unsullied by secular trends such as gambling and professionalism. More recent commentators have argued that sport served to heighten the social divisions of nineteenth century urban society, not least because organised sport required resources of time and money not available to the poor. For Meller sport was:

not a means for promoting social integration and civic spirit,
but...a...reflection of the socio-economic division in society.¹²⁵

¹²⁴ Chronicle 27/1/10; 7/1/10.

¹²⁵ Meller Leisure and the Changing City p. 236.

There is insufficient local data to support or refute this view entirely, though it should be said that some apparently 'proletarian' denominations did have their own sports teams, like the Laygate Primitive Methodist cricket club. Equally, though, neither St. Hilda's Working Men's Club nor the Gospel Temperance Union had organised sports clubs. It is possible that the development of secular clubs in the Deerness Valley and Teesdale was partly an attempt to bring the working classes - or, perhaps more accurately, the non respectable classes - into organised sporting activity. Yet if the churches were unable to monopolise provision of sport as they failed to monopolise provision of entertainment, their work in the sporting field - with their temperance cricket festivals and missionary cycling bands - was still important in providing both opportunities and a moral rationale for sporting activity in an urban environment .

Activities for Women.

Studies across the country have suggested that women were more active than men in attending churches and chapels and in supporting their activities. In Bradford, Chadwick found a 'low proportion' of men amongst church and chapel goers; in London McLeod concluded 'there was certainly greater pressure on women than men to attend church', a finding endorsed by Cox, who argues that 14.6% of women in Lambeth attended evening services, compared to 9.5% of men. In York, Royle lists 'men', along with young people and the working classes, as groups likely to provide 'consumer resistance' to the efforts of the Established Church.¹²⁶ If women did predominate in church activities, it was not

¹²⁶ Chadwick R.E. 'Churches and People in Bradford and District 1880-1914: The Protestant Churches in an Urban Environment' (University of Oxford D. Phil. thesis, 1986) chapter 4; McLeod H. Class and Religion in the Late Victorian City (London, 1974) p.31; Cox The English Churches p.26; Royle Victorian Church in York p.33.

because more women were admitted into the churches. Confirmation returns from the Anglican parish of St. Stephen's, South Shields show that males accounted for 52.9% of those confirmed in 1894. Similar evidence from St. Hilda's - taken over the period 1884-1901 - does show that female candidates were in the majority (57.8% of the 964 candidates) but not to a degree which would make them obviously the numerically dominant group in the church. In the Congregational Church, 51.6% of members listed in records from the Ocean Road church dating from 1872 - 1913 were men.¹²⁷ This need not mean that men were as likely to stay in active membership once recruited. This was, perhaps, more likely in organisations like the Congregational church, where membership was an active adult decision, than in the Established Church, where confirmation doubled as a rite of passage as well as a conscious statement of religious commitment. The pressures of work, marriage and the desire to conform to secular norms were all capable of driving young men away from the church after they had joined it.¹²⁸ Yet it would be wrong to take for granted assumptions about men's role in religious activity. It is certainly true that men played important managerial roles regardless of their numbers in any given church. There is also evidence that some churches were successful in attracting men not only to institutes and sporting clubs, but also to more directly spiritual activities. Visitation Returns from the largely working class Anglican parish of Holy Trinity suggest that men sometimes outnumbered women at Holy Communion and that midday celebrations attracted congregations with a majority

¹²⁷ St. Stephen's Parish Magazine November 1894; St. Hilda's Parish Confirmation Registers 1884-1901; Ocean Road Congregational Church Minute Book passim.

¹²⁸ Currie R., Gilbert A. and Horsley L. Churches and Churchgoers Patterns of Church Growth in the British Isles Since 1700 (Oxford, 1977) p.91.

of men. At St. Jude's, men made up 50-60% of the congregation at communion services according to the 1912 return. Four years earlier the incumbent of St. Oswin's had returned Easter communicant figures over a three year period, which have a 53.6% majority of men.¹²⁹ Of course, none of this is sufficient evidence to support a complete revision of the perceived view of the importance of women in church services - indeed, the very fact that bishops felt it necessary to ask a direct question about the number of men attending services suggests that the Church authorities saw male non attendance as a matter of concern. Nevertheless it is clear that the assumption that men were not attending church activities might be a dangerous one, especially given that most authorities regard the Established Church as more prone to larger female attendance than the nonconformist bodies. At the very least local factors, such as the relatively large number of men in mining communities, had a significant impact on the gender balance of church attendance. Thus from Esh, it was reported in 1904 that there were always more male communicants than females at services, and sometimes twice as many.¹³⁰

Whatever their comparative numerical strength, however, it is clear that women constituted a particular target group whose needs the churches tried to meet in a number of ways. One response was to make use of what were perceived as women's skills to the benefit of the churches themselves. Women were almost invariably responsible for the organisation and planning of those bazaars which were a vital source of income for all religious organisations of this period. The Gazette recorded the Mayor's speech at the opening of the Primitive

¹²⁹ Visitation Returns Holy Trinity 1908 and 1912; St. Jude's 1912; St. Oswin's 1908.

¹³⁰ Visitation Return Esh 1904.

Methodist Bazaar of 1870, proceeds of which went to service the running debt on the Glebe chapel, thus:

he believed that if Christian people would only give according to their means there would be little need for the ladies to make such exertions as they had in the present case, but that was not the question now...the gentlemen present would have to submit to being victimized [laughter]

When St. Stephen's parish organised a similar event to finance a complete renovation of the church twenty years later, the first step taken was to appoint a committee of 32, all women, of whom twenty were spinsters. They organised weekly sewing meetings in each other's houses, at which the hostess gave tea and donations were made towards the purchase of materials, since there were 'plenty of willing hands, but they cannot afford to give.'¹³¹ Nor were efforts confined to such large scale events. Sewing meetings and guilds produced materials for regular sales of work. At St. Mary's, Tyne Dock there were three such meetings whilst St. Oswin's had both senior and junior guilds. A similar meeting at Chapter Row Wesleyan chapel was sufficiently well organised to hold its own picnic at Jesmond Dene in 1905.¹³² These activities certainly helped to contribute to a stereotypical view of women's role: indeed, the churches underlined this further with activities such as the competition organised by the St. Hilda's branch of the G.F.S. in 1887, designed to 'stimulate the members in the cultivation of homely and useful arts' and offering prizes for bread making, patching in flannel and calico, darning, knitting and cultivating plants in pots.¹³³ Yet the organisation of bazaars also offered opportunities for the exercise of logistic and financial

¹³¹ Gazette 15/6/70; St. Stephen's Parish Magazine December 1890 and passim.

¹³² Visitation Returns St. Mary's 1904; St. Oswin's 1908; Gazette 19/7/05.

¹³³ St. Hilda's Parish Magazine October 1887.

management skills not always available to women and enabled older women to experience a camaraderie not necessarily available elsewhere. Nor were these the only opportunities available for women in the churches.

The churches' concentration on the role and importance of motherhood might be seen as a further affirmation of women's traditional place in society. The particular importance of the family in recruitment to church activities along with the growing fears about the collapse of family life and the alleged incompetence of women as mothers, help to explain the formation of a number of groups whose purpose was to reinforce the churches' view of the Christian family. Enrolment for the two Mothers' Meetings held each week in St. Hilda's parish was carried out at the parish mission house in Barrington St. This location and the weekly programme - a bible reading and explanation followed by the reading of interesting books and sewing work - suggests that the meetings were designed with poorer mothers in mind, though here again, the language of class may be less accurate than that of culture. These were clearly self improvement meetings aimed at women who followed respectable patterns of behaviour. Significantly too they were designed to inculcate respectable views about the raising of families, as Canon Baily explained in 1885:

he besought mothers to do their utmost to make home attractive, and to keep as far as possible the young from wandering about in the evening without control¹³⁴

This latter was a matter of particular concern to the Rev. Arthur McCullagh at St. Stephen's, South Shields who, in 1904, reported that:

¹³⁴ St. Hilda's Parish Magazine March 1888: Gazette 23/1/85.

children of quite tender years are permitted to run about the streets until 10 o'clock at night and even after that hour.

Four years later he significantly attributed the shift away from such behaviour to the influence of the Mothers' Union, which had 'rescued parents' from their earlier 'neglect' of their children.¹³⁵ The Union appears in South Shields visitation returns from the turn of the century onwards, though not in the Deerness Valley returns until 1908 and only in Middleton amongst the Teesdale parishes after 1912. Sponsored by the Durham diocese, the Union's rules made its purpose explicit. Members were to stop swearing and to prevent intemperance and to pray for children to make them:

loving, obedient, truthful and pure...to teach them modesty and self respect from an early age and to make the best sleeping arrangements for them...to keep them from bad companions and from idling about the streets after dark and to be careful in choosing their places of work.¹³⁶

Whilst its aims might seem to speak to a working class clientele, the Union aimed to awaken a desire to train children properly amongst 'mothers of all classes'; indeed, in 1900 the visitation survey asked to what extent the Union had brought together women of different classes. The fulfilment of this desire to unite women of different social backgrounds in the shared experience of motherhood seems to have depended greatly on the social composition of the parishes concerned. Thus at St. Jude's, it was reported that there was no Mothers' Union in 1900 and that there were no different classes to unite. At St. Mary's, in the same year, the

¹³⁵ Visitation Returns St. Stephen's 1904; 1908.

¹³⁶ Rules of Durham Diocesan Mothers' Union, enclosed in Scrapbook 14/6.

Mothers' Union was described as working class because the parish was itself working class. Four years later, the Union had over eighty members, suggesting that it could work in a predominantly working class environment. What it could not do, however, was to spread its messages of respectable parenting and Christian motherhood outside those already committed to membership. Assessments of the value of the Mothers' Union regularly make this point. From St. Mark's it was reported that the Union 'touched very few', from Holy Trinity that most members were communicants before they joined the Union and from St. Jude's that good work was only done with 'our own people' in the organisation. At St. Hilda's the clergy vetted applicants for membership to ensure that they would fulfil the Union's aims.¹³⁷ One way in which the churches could tackle the problem of those outside the Union was through the type of 'rescue work' discussed below, a second was through the appointment of mission women.

Mission women played an important part in the Anglican Church's attempts to appeal to a broad 'parish' constituency. The best documented example of such an appointment in South Shields is from St. Stephen's parish, where the Parish Mission Women's Association advised on appointments and Lady Frederick Cavendish provided two thirds of the woman's stipend, thus alleviating the financial difficulties which a similar post created for St. Mark's parish.¹³⁸ As a member of the parish staff, the mission woman was separate from the other women of the parish, but not entirely divorced from them. When Lady Frederick

¹³⁷ Visitation Returns St. Mark's; Holy Trinity; St. Jude's 1912.

¹³⁸ St. Stephen's Parish Magazine January 1894; April 1897: Visitation Return St. Mark's 1904.

Cavendish visited St. Stephen's parish to lecture on mission work in 1892, the magazine trusted that there would be 'a good beating up of our lady friends to hear her'. Her speech to the Mothers' Meeting significantly highlighted many of the themes implicit in the churches' attitude to women's affairs and family matters:

Look upon marriage as a Holy thing to be entered into, not thoughtlessly, but in fear of God...she liked fathers and mothers to feel that they were responsible for their own children...Do not let the school pence be wasted on drink or otherwise foolishly...Rather let them deposit the money they had saved with Miss Robson [the mission woman] to get good clothing; or put it in the Post Office Savings Banks, and save it to buy their boys' work tools, and to help their girls in starting up.¹³⁹

That the goal of respectability which so obviously inspired these remarks was not beyond the poor may be seen from the parish magazine's reflections on the death of Miss Robson in 1893. 'Quiet, sensible and conscientious' she had made ninety visits per week, regardless of the weather and her own health and:

no higher praise can be spoken of her than that her loss will be felt most of all by the poor.¹⁴⁰

Such work typifies the 'outreach' function which women were often asked to fulfil by the churches and which lay behind the employment of women as visitors by all the denominations. The mission woman may thus be seen as a professional embodiment of a common female role in the churches, aptly summarised by St. Stephen's parish magazine in February 1894:

¹³⁹ St. Stephen's Parish Magazine February and March 1892.

¹⁴⁰ *ibid.* December 1893.

By means of the Mothers' Meeting, and the clothing club, and the constant and regular visitation of the members of these organisations, a large number of parishioners are brought into closer touch with the work of the church in the parish. As an 'Intelligence Department' by means of which information is given to the clergy of cases of sickness which otherwise might escape observation, the work is...invaluable.¹⁴¹

Inculcating Christian views of motherhood and exploiting 'women's skills' to financial gain and to help male clergy carry out the day to day running of their mission might fairly be seen as a rather unenlightened attitude towards women. It should, therefore, be added that the churches also provided opportunities for women to broaden their horizons. Not least of these was, of course, Sunday school teaching. The churches also provided educational opportunities, albeit on a limited scale. In 1890 the Queen St. United Methodist Free Church organised a meeting of its mutual improvement class at which all the speakers were spinsters. This was a significant achievement at a time when few women were willing to speak in public, a problem for St. Mary's parish Mothers' Union as late as 1904.¹⁴² Classes for women were held, though their curriculum could be limited, as the vicar of St. Thomas' indicated in his response to the 1900 visitation survey question on the subject of continued education in the parish:

As a rule, football absorbs boys' attention. Girls are rather fond of fancy work, and my wife last winter succeeded in making two girls very enthusiastic in working Honiton Lace.¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ St. Stephen's Parish Magazine February 1894.

¹⁴² Gazette 28/2/90: Visitation Return St. Mary's 1904.

¹⁴³ Visitation Return St. Thomas 1900.

Other groups were more ambitious. The Laygate Lane Presbyterian Church had its own Y.W.C.A. from 1895, its later union with the Y.M.C.A. confirming that women were able to join in the variety of educational and entertainment activities organised by the churches though not specifically designed with women in mind.¹⁴⁴ One organisation which was designed for women - the town Y.W.C.A. - does provide an interesting contrast to its brother organisation. With its own rooms in Victoria St., with a membership of 150 (not including associate members) in 1890 and with significant patronage (Mrs. J.C. Stevenson presided at the inaugural meeting of the association, Mrs. Cay provided the teas) the Association appears not dissimilar to the Y.M.C.A. Some of its activities show a similar appetite for the outdoors; a rambling society organised fortnightly walks in the locality. Yet the staple fare of the organisations differed for the Y.W.C.A. offered needlework, millinery, dressmaking and cooking alongside reading, writing and bible study classes. To attribute the apparent failure of the association to this rather limited diet would be anachronistic - indeed, when listing the attractions of the association the Gazette focused on Mme. Lofvall's dress making class - but it is again clear that the churches did little to challenge the traditional views of women's place and activities at this time.¹⁴⁵

Even this limited fare was not available to young women outside South Shields. In the Deerness Valley, the Rev. Mr. Wesley's attempt to form a girls'

¹⁴⁴ *Gazette* 26/1/95.

¹⁴⁵ *ibid.* 13/11/90; 4/9/85; 5/4/90; 7/5/90; 1/10/90.

night school at Hamsteels was seen as too great an innovation and failed¹⁴⁶ - perhaps the nature of the valley communities, with their preponderance of young men and with a limited number of young, single women, made any development of women's activities less likely. The same was not true of Teesdale, where the gender balance was more equal. Here too, though, the churches did little specifically for women, perhaps subscribing to the traditional view of the High Teesdale woman as expressed by the Teesdale Mercury in 1895:

Women...are everywhere kind and attentive. In this district they are remarkably so...A comely matron, presiding in a humble, but clean and neat abode - the mother of blooming and athletic children - a form and face retaining much of the grace and vivacity of youth - a ready smile, at once bespeaking a hospitable welcome and a cheerful mind - manners as free from awkwardness on the one hand, as from forwardness on the other, and apparently regulated by the influence of real kindness and genuine good sense. Such is a rapid sketch of female character drawn in the lonely wilds of Teesdale.¹⁴⁷

So long as the preponderant image of women was as homemakers, the development of activities designed to offer broader opportunities to women was unlikely, particularly in rural communities.

A final area in the churches' work for women was the purely spiritual. This is not to suggest that men were excluded from spiritual activities - bible classes alone show that this was not the case. Yet women were more actively recruited into liturgical and prayer based organisations than were men. At St. Stephen's,

¹⁴⁶ Visitation Return Hamsteels 1892.

¹⁴⁷ Mercury 18/12/95.

the Guild of Church Life was open to young women and girls, its purpose to encourage:

Mutual sympathy and encouragement in regular worship, especially at Holy Communion; work for others for Christ's sake; a personal life of watchfulness and prayer.

Membership was confined to those who had been confirmed and activities included lectures on Holy Communion and missionary topics as well as games and work done on clothes to be given to the poor at Christmas.¹⁴⁸ A similar group at St. Hilda's is even more instructive in that it was originally founded as a Guild for all communicants, but by 1892 had become limited to girls only.¹⁴⁹ This body appears to owe something to the Catholic Confraternities which also show greater strength amongst women.¹⁵⁰ The longevity of Altar Societies similarly underlines the close link between women and devotional and liturgical activities. Lest this be taken to suggest that women were more religious than men, however, it should be added that these tasks were particularly important only in Roman and Anglo-Catholic churches. Whilst the evidence would do little to contradict Chadwick's assertion that women often attended church as 'family representatives' and that religion in general was often associated with 'women's qualities' of humility, compassion and mildness, it is also clear that churches had not, by 1914, become the sole preserve of women - as Wolffe argues:

¹⁴⁸ St. Stephen's Parish Magazine June 1893; December 1900; November 1895.

¹⁴⁹ St. Hilda's Parish Magazine March 1887; May 1892.

¹⁵⁰ See above p.140-143.

It does not seem that in England the 'feminization' of Christianity had proceeded to the extent that it had in contemporary France.¹⁵¹

Conclusions.

The auxiliary organisations formed by churches of all denominations during this period served both to reinforce the support of existing members and adherents and to attract new supporters to the churches. The wide variety of activities for adults during this period indicates a sophistication and subtlety about the churches' approach to these tasks. Activities were targeted at appropriate groups, resources were not expended where the possible benefits were limited and the churches proved willing to adjust their methods over time as popular fashions and interests changed.

Significant costs were incurred in providing auxiliary activities. Expensive buildings were a drain on finances, though this could be overcome either by wealthy patronage or by voluntary effort. Such efforts, typified in the fund raising bazaar, could themselves be of indirect value in promoting fellowship and community activity amongst the congregations involved. Nevertheless, some denominations were less capable of providing a wide range of activities simply because they lacked the financial resources to do so. This may have reinforced the evangelical impulse - with its rejection of ancillary activities - amongst some

¹⁵¹ Chadwick Churches in Bradford pp.170 ff.; Wolfe J. *The End of Victorian Values ? Women, Religion and the Death of Queen Victoria* in Women in The Church: Studies in Church History no. 27 (1990) pp.498.

of the more 'proletarian' denominations, though the evidence of the Gospel Temperance Union shows that this was not necessarily the case. Ancillary organisations also incurred time costs. These were more easily met by those churches which had a professional ministry, though it is also clear that lay leadership was available both within those denominations and within Protestant nonconformity. Both case studies show that conflict was possible between lay run auxiliaries and parent church authorities. Whilst this was not something which the churches wished to foster, it might be argued that such tensions were a sign of vigour and development in the churches and prevented organisations slipping into atrophy. Rarely in the communities studied do the auxiliary organisations seem to have developed into the kind of 'vigorous, self contained movements' which caused 'unease' amongst church leaders in Reading.¹⁵²

The promotion of a 'respectable' leisure culture was the benefit against which the churches offset the costs of providing auxiliary activities. The definition of respectability changed over time - for Thompson 'the formerly unacceptable became acceptable as the working classes became somewhat better understood'. Popular behaviour itself also changed; 'roughness, violence, drunkenness declined, so that conduct became more respectable.'¹⁵³ The nature of respectability was also subject to interpretation within the churches themselves. Disputes between auxiliary organisations and the wider church authorities often revolved around this issue. Denominational differences further complicate the issue of what constituted respectable behaviour. Nevertheless, it is

¹⁵² Yeo Religion and Voluntary Organisations p. 167.

¹⁵³ Thompson F.M.L. The Rise of Respectable Society: A Social History of Victorian Britain 1830 - 1900 p. 277.

clear both that there was a general consensus about the nature of respectable behaviour and that this was not something confined to the middle classes. Evidence of working class participation in church sponsored activities is to be found in the Roman Catholic church, amongst the Nonconformists of the Deerness Valley and in the congregations at the South Shields Gospel Temperance Union. St. Hilda's West St. Boys' Club, founded by the Rev. C.H. Rolt in 1892, was explicitly designed for boys 'altogether of the Rough Class'. It attracted 14 to 18 year olds and levied a subscription of 1d. a fortnight, significantly reducing this figure for unemployed members. Members were to behave in a 'quiet' manner; gambling and bad language might result in expulsion. So popular was this organisation devoted to games and pastimes that membership had to be limited to 150. Canon Savage reported that 300 passed through the club in the winter months and assessed its general importance to the church:

This club has certainly a civilising and satisfactory influence on the boys. It brings some of the lowest districts in the town into close and friendly touch with the clergy; and it further helps to continue our touch with many of the boys who leave our St. Hilda's Day Schools.

The club's success prompted the church to consider the needs of young women and girls and by 1896 a Girls' Club was meeting on the same lines in Cornwallis St.¹⁵⁴ Of course, all these examples do not refute the generally held thesis that the urban working classes were least receptive to the churches' message of respectability. They do, however, suggest that working class respectability was possible, even if only for a limited number. The churches helped to foster this by

¹⁵⁴ Visitation Return St. Hilda's 1900; rules of Boys' Club enclosed in Scrapbook 14/4; St. Hilda's Parish Magazine April 1896; February 1896.

providing facilities, often in areas of newly developed housing, in a variety of fields - educational, entertainment and sporting. These exposed large sections of the urban population to activities not otherwise available to them or, at best, only available through outlets - such as the pub - which the churches regarded as unacceptable. The development of secular leisure provision as the period progressed meant that the churches faced competition, though it should be noted that the churches' relative decline in this respect was more marked in larger urban areas, where there was a ready market for commercial leisure activity, than in more rural areas, especially those, like upper Teesdale, which were experiencing economic and demographic decline. In any case, the development of secular competition should not be taken as a sign that the churches had failed in their objectives. Auxiliary activities continued to maintain and reinforce the support of those already committed to the churches whilst aspects of the growing secular leisure culture might, in themselves, be taken as a sign that some aspects of 'respectability' had filtered into broader culture. Obelkevich saw rural society in South Lindsey drifting 'towards respectability' from the 1840s onward. For Thompson too:

Commercial provision [of leisure activities] meant, on the whole, quieter, more civilized and in a sense more disciplined social behaviour.¹⁵⁵

Whilst it would be naive to credit the churches with the sole responsibility for this, it seems likely that their pioneering role in the provision of leisure activities may have influenced this development.

¹⁵⁵ Obelkevich J.T. Religion and Rural Society: South Lindsey 1825-1875 (Oxford, 1976) p.78; Thompson Rise of Respectable Society p.288.

Chapter 6: Churches and the Wider Community.

Introduction.

This chapter examines the work of the churches outside the penumbra of 'church organisations'. It considers the part played by religious bodies in education, poor relief and welfare issues. It will suggest that any attempt to confine the churches' influence to those who attended services - or, indeed, to those who participated in the church sponsored activities discussed in the previous chapter - would be misleading as the churches exercised a wider influence both on individuals and as discrete organisations, than such a restriction would allow.

Any division between 'church organisations' and these other aspects of the churches' work is, to some extent, a false one. Nettleship's study of Broad Churchmanship in London highlights an element of the Anglican church which:

wanted to minister to the pastoral needs of all English society, to become the centre of community life in every parish, urban as well as rural, and to reconcile the different classes and religious beliefs within one organic society.

In this objective, poor relief and the parish institute played equal and complimentary parts.¹ Such objectives found a ready echo in some Durham parishes, especially under the leadership of Bishops Lightfoot and Westcott. The extent to which these broader 'integrative' aims were present amongst the various nonconformist denominations will also be considered in the chapter. Comparison between the three case study areas of County Durham will also allow some

¹ Nettleship L.E. 'William Fremantle, Simon Barnett and the Broad Church Origins of Toynbee Hall' in the Journal of Ecclesiastical History vol. 33 no. 4 (October 1982) p.566.

examination of the concept of paternalism and of its wider impact on the churches' role in their local communities.

The Social Question.

The churches' response to the 'social question' depended on the context in which they worked. South Shields, the Gazette explained in 1895 was:

essentially a working class population [where] the percentage of impoverished homes is deplorably large²

The shift of population away from the town centre underlined the poverty prevailing amongst those who remained; by 1912 Holy Trinity had become a 'slum parish'.³ This residual poverty might be aggravated at times of trade depressions such as that of 1895 or by industrial disputes and lock outs, such as the shipbuilders' strike of 1910. In that year, there were 1,452 paupers in the South Shields Union workhouse with a further 6,093 receiving outdoor relief.⁴ Given that the number receiving relief by no means accounted for all the poor in the town, both persistent and recurrent poverty were clearly issues for the churches of South Shields to face.

It would be wrong to suggest that poverty did not exist in the villages studied. In Teesdale, the decline of the lead mining industry caused particular

² Gazette 3/5/05.

³ Visitation Return Holy Trinity 1912.

⁴ Gazette 11/8/10.

problems, though migration out of the dale as the period progressed helped to relieve these. Earlier, the favourable economic circumstances and the paternalism of the London Lead Company made poverty comparatively rare in upper Teesdale. True, it was still possible to find a Middleton dwelling in 1890 which was:

what you would take for a cow house...not ten miles from the town end...

yet, even so, the 1900 visit of the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes to Barnard Castle could still inspire the Teesdale Mercury's columnist to use the language of the missionary to enlighten his readers about the squalor of urban life:

I have heard some of the missionaries tell of some of the horrible degradation of the low districts.

By contrast, the same paper reported in 1868 the Teesdale had avoided 'the demoralising influence of want...felt...elsewhere in England'.⁵ A similar mixture of economic buoyancy and benevolent paternalism in the Deerness villages meant that the problems of the urban areas were a matter for study and comment rather than an issue of direct experience there too, as the Esh Primitive Methodists' 1900 lecture on 'Life and Preaching in the London Slums' would suggest.⁶ The distinction between urban and village poverty is, of course, a relative one - it was still possible for a 75 year old resident of Waterhouses to be killed by a train whilst scavenging for cinders in the colliery sidings as late as 1910⁷ - yet it does

⁵ Mercury 13/11/90; 6/11/95; 23/11/04 - first published 1/8/68.

⁶ Chronicle 31/8/00.

⁷ *ibid.* 25/11/10; 2/12/10.

seem clear that the problem of poverty was much greater in South Shields than in any other of the areas studied.

Attempts to provide charitable relief for the poor characterise the churches' response to the social question for much of this period. Christmas inspired most denominations to remember the poor of South Shields. The Ocean Road Congregationalists organised a Christmas night concert which raised £7-00 for poor relief in 1885; the Laygate Primitive Methodists gave a free tea to 500 children five years later; the Frederick St. Wesleyan Guild provided a tea and concert for 300 poor and needy in 1900 whilst the Queen St. United Methodist Christmas tea for poor children was an established annual event.⁸ Protestant nonconformity was clearly capable of giving to the poor, though, for a variety of reasons, the Church of England was more active in this field. Yeo argues that the cost of administration, especially the costs incurred by ambitious building - limited the amount of money which Nonconformist congregations might spend on poor relief⁹; establishment made this a less pressing concern for the Anglicans. For Inglis, the evangelical impulse which lay at the heart of much Protestant nonconformity meant that social reform was nothing more than a matter of passing interest for many dissenters, an ideological stance reinforced by the presence of the middle classes amongst congregations which, Inglis argues, were likely to champion the virtues of self improvement rather than charity for the poor.¹⁰ It would be dangerous to pursue this view too far. Not all Nonconformist

⁸ Gazette 26/12/85; 30/12/90; 28/12/00; for Queen St. teas, see above p.206.

⁹ Yeo S. Religion and Voluntary Organisations in Crisis (London, 1976) pp.158-162.

¹⁰ Inglis K.S. Churches and the Working Classes in Victorian England (London, 1963) pp.294-5.

congregations were dominated by the middle classes and the Forward Movement shows that even in Wesleyanism a social conscience was possible. Nevertheless, the established church with its parochial organisation and mission to the whole community was, perhaps, more directly engaged with the problems caused by poverty than were the Protestant Nonconformists. Westcott's episcopate witnessed an emphasis on the 'social gospel'. As he told his clergy in 1900:

Social work is indeed the essence of the gospel...such reform is part of the consecration of man and of men¹¹

Canon Savage, in particular, seems to have taken this to heart and believed that:

the Church has a message for all the lives of men and her officers cannot 'pass by on the other side'¹²

Anglican help to the poor took various forms. As representatives of the establishment, priests were active in local charities - the vicar of Holy Trinity, for example, chaired the 1910 A.G.M. of the borough's Shoeless Children Fund. In 1893 the town clerk sent Canon Savage £10 to be spent on poor relief, secure, perhaps, in the knowledge that the vicar of St. Hilda's was a proponent of the Church's involvement in public relief schemes which made its efforts more readily acceptable to the poor and which themselves benefited from the help of priests who knew the needs of their parishioners.¹³ The Established Church also traditionally drew on bequests to the poor such as the £1026: 8: 7 left by Miss

¹¹ Newcastle Daily Journal 25/10/00.

¹² Savage H.E. Pastoral Visitation (Newcastle, 1905) p.137.

¹³ Gazette 18/11/10; Letter 16/3/93, enclosed in Scrapbook 14/4; Savage Pastoral Visitation pp.125-6.

Young to the poor in Holy Trinity parish in 1905.¹⁴ These advantages should be set against some of the difficulties inherent in parochial organisation. As the Rev. Mr. Brown, vicar of St. Mark's, explained in 1908:

The parochial system of dealing with the poor lends itself to overlapping and leaves too heavy a burden on the poor parishes and not enough on the rich.¹⁵

This was a real difficulty - as early as 1883 it had been suggested to the diocesan conference that wealthy parishes might 'work in concert' with poorer parishes in the light of changing residential patterns which had undermined that 'wholesome mixture of rich and poor' which had previously existed in urban parishes, though, in the opinion of Canon Savage, the 'intensely parochial attitude' of 'average English Churchmen' - especially those in 'the fashionable suburbs of towns where self centred parochialism is apt to reign supreme' - militated against such schemes.¹⁶ Nevertheless, in absolute terms collections for the poor realised larger sums in the better off parishes. Thus 1897 vestry accounts for St. Stephen's parish show £4: 3: 9 collected for poor relief, approximately 3.77% of total income for the year. Records from St. Hilda's parish show that £20: 17: 10 - approximately 5.62% of the total offertories collected in a six month period from January to July 1911 - went into the parish poor relief fund, which was the object of all early morning service collections. Other overseas and domestic causes (including St. Verca's hostel which carried out rescue work amongst the women of the borough) accounted for a further 36.36% of total income from collections

¹⁴ Gazette 29/4/05.

¹⁵ Visitation Return St. Mark's 1908.

¹⁶ Durham Diocesan Calendar 1883 p. xlv; Savage Pastoral Visitation p.131.

at St. Hilda's during the period of the survey.¹⁷ Members of the parish Communicants' Guild made clothes to give to poor children in the schools and the ladies of St. Hilda's Dorcas Society performed a similar service, each subscribing 2/6 to the cost of materials used in the work. Their efforts were clearly on behalf of the very poor in the parish since the church also ran a clothing club for those able to save money.¹⁸

The recipients of such relief tended to be the particularly vulnerable. Canon Savage's advice on this matter was forthright. Those who made unwarranted demands; those who could receive relief from the state but refused, from pride, to do so; those tramps who were 'unworthy strangers' should all be courteously rejected since:

The Church cannot be made an agency for relieving the Poor Law or responsible relations.

Instead, Anglican efforts were to be focused on widows, the lonely, the thrifty wives of drunken husbands and those 'respectable' families which had fallen on hard times.¹⁹ Children also benefited. The inspiration for the Poor Bairs' Gala of 1886 came from the Vicar of St. Hilda's and the event itself provided tea and entertainment for 2,200 children many of whom were 'shoeless and in rags.' 8,056 free breakfasts were provided to the children of St. Hilda's schools during the 1895 crisis and in 1902 Canon Savage reported that 13 parcels of clothing and

¹⁷ St. Stephen's Parish Magazine May 1897; St. Hilda's Parish Church Preachers' Book 1893 - 1914 passim.

¹⁸ St. Hilda's Parish Magazine July 1892; November 1885.

¹⁹ Savage Pastoral Visitation p. 112.

400 free meals were provided for poor children in St. Hilda's day schools.²⁰ The elderly enjoyed the surplus funds of the 1886 Poor Bairns' Gala in the form of a tea and treat and were entertained by concerts and entertainments such as that held for 138 old people of St. Stephen's parish in 1900, financed by the profits of a concert by the parish minstrel troupe.²¹

The prominence of the Established Church in providing poor relief should not, however, completely obscure the work of other denominations. The Salvation Army was typically active amongst the poor of South Shields. During General Booth's 1905 visit to the town, the mayor described the army as:

one of the great movements for the spiritual and social well being
of the people that characterise modern civilisation

It was, he stated, 'the best expression of Christian Socialism'.²² His views were no doubt coloured by the Army's work amongst the poor in 1895 when they organised a soup kitchen. In 1910 1000 poor children were provided with a Christmas meal and entertainment and food was provided for 300 aged poor.²³ Whilst the wide ranging social reforms of 'In Darkest England' were never fully carried out, it is clear that the Army's rescue work continued and, arguably, deepened as Booth's broader programme failed to get off the ground. The South Shields Gospel Temperance Union also mixed its evangelical zeal with a concern for the poor, its hall acting as a centre for the distribution of soup in 1885 and for

²⁰ Gazette 18/9/86; St. Hilda's Parish Magazine April 1895; Press clipping (n.d.) included in Scrapbook 14/7.

²¹ Gazette 8/1/00.

²² *ibid.* 28/8/05.

²³ *ibid.* 2/3/95; 22/12/10.

the provision of free Christmas food to hungry children and drunkards in 1890. In 1895 the Union provided free breakfasts for shoeless children, a scheme organised by a committee boasting four nonconformist ministers amongst its members.²⁴ For the Roman Catholics of the borough, poor relief was difficult. Catholic clergy were not active in the administration of public relief schemes and the church lacked the well to do membership which might be capable of providing funds for the poor. Nevertheless, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul was active in St. Bede's parish, celebrating its golden jubilee in 1904 and organising at least one collection for all the poor of the town, regardless of denomination.²⁵ There were annual collections in support of the work of the Little Sisters of Mercy amongst the homeless in Newcastle and Good Friday offertories were made over to the poor of the town. The importance of good works to Catholic theology, coupled with the interest of Cardinal Manning in the social question, helped to inspire the church to carry out work amongst the poor; its lack of resources and public patronage made large scale help difficult to sustain.

The different circumstances of Teesdale and the Deerness Valley meant that the churches there were less engaged in providing direct poor relief. Much of their involvement in broader welfare issues in these areas took the form of individual initiatives by ministers and lay church members or support for schemes provided by local employers. This offers some credence to Cox's view that the churches were driven out of welfare work by a process of 'functional

²⁴ Gazette 9/2/85; 11/12/90; 20/2/95.

²⁵ Notice Book 2 17/7/04; Gazette 16/8/80.

differentiation', though it is also clear that they had never played a major welfare role in the villages, thanks largely to the benevolent paternalism of the major employers. Certainly, in the Deerness Valley, the Methodist societies appear to have concentrated their charitable efforts more on their own members, than on the broader community. The proceeds of an 1880 concert by the East Hedley Hope Primitive Methodist choir, for example, went to a member of the connection who was too sick to work; collections in Esh parish church, on the other hand, included a sum for the victims of 'colliery accidents' in general.²⁶ Yet even in the Deerness Valley, the churches retained close links with relief work. Tom Pearson and John Wilson M.P., both leading Primitive Methodists, were, in their turn, secretaries of the annual aged peoples' treat in Waterhouses.²⁷ It is a moot point whether these men were identified in the public mind as members of church communities or, especially in Wilson's case, as holders of lay office when they carried out such activities, though, in a sense, their very presence linked the churches to the social question. A more direct link between the churches and social work relatively late in this period was the Deerness Valley Nursing Association.²⁸ None of this is to suggest that the Deerness churches were alone capable of providing welfare for the people of the valley. Rather, they participated in maintaining a favourable status quo based on economic prosperity and paternalistic employment practices. When circumstances changed, as in Teesdale, the churches were not alone capable of sustaining the welfare of existing communities. Unemployment consequent upon the demise of lead mining in Teesdale was only really solved by migration, and the churches could do little

²⁶ Chronicle 26/11/80 and Visitation Return Esh 1882.

²⁷ Chronicle 17/2/05; 26/1/00.

²⁸ See above p.66.

more than offer sympathy and outdoor relief to men such as the 411 tramps who passed through Teesdale during fourteen days in 1905 when 'all previous records in tramp invasion were broken.'²⁹

Critics of the churches have argued that they were unwilling to challenge the economic conditions which made such poverty possible. In part this was because the churches' perception of the root cause of poverty - certainly in the early part of this period - was closely linked to personal morality and the ideal of 'respectability'. Thus Canon Savage's charitable intentions were directed at those who suffered as a result of immoral behaviour - the wives of drunkards or the otherwise respectable family lured into gambling as a means of making money to ease the burdens of poverty. True he recognised that social circumstances did contribute to the problem of poverty - 'who is to judge,' he asks in Pastoral Visitation, 'the influence of surroundings?' - but surroundings were important in that they coloured decisions about personal morality; Savage did not see them as primary causes of poverty. Such views support Cox's view of the churches as defenders of the established order.³⁰ Certainly Social Christianity adopted a reformist and not a radical stance. Both Hughes and Mearns were members of the conciliation committee which solved coal and gas disputes; Lightfoot's reputation was as a great reconciler whilst Westcott looked to the nation as an extended family group, in which the pursuit of individual goals would be subordinated to the good of all, since:

²⁹ Mercury 19/4/05.

³⁰ Savage Pastoral Visitation p.120: Cox J. The English Churches in a Secular Society: Lambeth 1870-1930 (New York, 1982) chapter 7.

humanity [is] an organic whole, a vital unity formed by the combination of contributory members mutually expedient.³¹

Yet whilst moderation may have been the dominant view, criticism of the established order from within the churches was possible. The Moderator of the Northern Association of Baptist Churches told the 1900 conference in North Shields that 'the class of capitalists whose only creed was gold' was a permanent evil of modern society; the Unitarian church of South Shields looked to appoint a minister in 1900 who was 'well known' in labour politics. Addressing the Gospel Temperance Union Mutual Improvement class in 1895 Mr. Grice:

pointed out that if true socialism existed a better spirit would be created in all classes of the people.

Five years previously, the Union's missionary had advised all men to join trade unions, though pointing out that 'capital as well as labour had rights.'³² Questioning of the established order was possible even in the Anglican Church. St. Hilda's magazine, for example, carried an article proposing profit sharing as a plan for 'bettering the condition of the working man' in 1890 and the 1900 visitation asked incumbents whether Christian faith served to purify business methods. Whilst most responses suggested that it did, the vicar of St. Thomas' replied that 'many of the most distrusted businessmen are professing Christians.'³³ Of course, none of this shows the churches of South Shields to be anything other

³¹ Bebbington D.W. *The Nonconformist Conscience: Chapel and Politics 1870-1914* (London, 1982) pp.54-5; Thompson D.M. 'Lightfoot as Victorian Churchman' in Dunn J.D.G. (ed.) *Lightfoot Centenary Lectures* (Durham, 1992) pp.1-17; Thompson D.M. 'The Christian Socialist Revival in Britain: A Reappraisal' in Davies R.W. and Helmstadter R.J. (eds.) *Religion and Irreligion in Victorian Society* (Padstow, 1992) pp.273-295; *Gazette* 1/10/90.

³² *Gazette* 5/6/00; 8/7/00; 24/1/95; 6/10/90.

³³ *St. Hilda's Parish Magazine* January 1890; *Visitation Return* St. Thomas' 1900.

than reformist in their outlook. Nevertheless it does suggest that the present organisation and dominant values of society were subject to questioning by adherents of the various churches of the town. At the very least, the churches helped to raise public consciousness about welfare issues. In the Deerness Valley the process was taken even further by the emerging radical group in Quebec which came into conflict with the moderate, largely Primitive Methodist leadership of the Durham Miners' Association. Moore suggests that 12 of the 14 core members of this group were themselves Primitive Methodists and drew their inspiration from Christian socialist ideals, but were willing to challenge employers over wages and employment practices. Whilst it might be argued that this group was acting in defiance of the wishes of the majority of village Methodists, Moore's research certainly suggests that their Christian belief and experience lay at the heart of their willingness to challenge the status quo.³⁴

Most authorities agree that the churches played a diminishing role in tackling the social question as the period progressed. For Cox, the process of functional differentiation and the development of specialist agencies to deal with the social question meant that the Lambeth churches retreated into themselves in the years after the First World War, though the process by which this 'tertiary' function was lost began after the 1906 election. During this period religious organisations failed to keep pace with the growing awareness of the complexity of social problems. They:

³⁴ Moore R. Pitmen, Preachers and Politics: The Effects of Methodism in a Durham Mining Community (Cambridge, 1974) pp.169-182.

never offered specific solutions to specific problems, only a general assault upon general problems of poverty, class divisions and disorder.³⁵

Such criticism may be a little harsh. The churches maintained a public profile in issues of social welfare. The occasion of Canon Roberson's appointment as vicar of St. Hilda's in 1910, allowed the Gazette to praise his work in infant health in his previous parish of St. Margaret's, Durham City. It was hoped this would continue as this was a field in which 'South Shields...offers an inexhaustible field for useful and humane work.'³⁶ The churches' awareness of the housing problem is indicated by a visitation survey question of 1912 which asked incumbents why any grave cases of bad housing which existed in their parishes had not been redressed by law. Two cited the presence of slum landlords in the local authorities as the main reason for continuing squalor, emphasising both the churches' awareness of the housing question and their willingness to criticise the status quo.³⁷

Redressing problems, however, required an influence in the broad area of social welfare which the churches of South Shields had clearly enjoyed in the late nineteenth century but which had begun to wane by the second decade of the twentieth century. Controversies such as the 1898 dispute over the 'sinister obligation' on pauper Anglican children to attend nonconformist services in the Union Workhouse seem to have been a thing of the past by 1914, though the

³⁵ Cox The English Churches pp.201-202.

³⁶ Gazette 15/6/10.

³⁷ Visitation Returns St. Hilda's and St. Mary's 1900.

election of guardians remained a matter for denominational rivalry.³⁸ It would, however, be wrong to see the churches as being in competition with secular authorities in this area. Writing in 1904 Savage recognised a role for the state in the provision of poor relief 'in times of special distress in a district' which were 'outside the general routine of parochial work' and he specifically advised the churches to avoid trespassing on that poor relief which was properly the state's preserve.³⁹ The growing recognition that poverty consequent upon unemployment - both involuntary and voluntary in the form of strikes - was part and parcel of the capitalist system meant that the secular state extended its capacity to deal with the problem. Much of the distress caused by the 1910 shipbuilders' strike in South Shields, for example, was alleviated by a secular 'distress committee', first established in 1905. This provided public works on a scale which the churches could simply not conceive and which had never been seen as part of their remit. The existence of a similar body in Croydon prompted Morris to conclude that:

The failure of voluntarist forms of action to remedy the social problems thrown up or exacerbated in the course of urbanisation paralleled the failure of the churches to achieve the programmes of moral and spiritual regeneration they had taken upon themselves in the mid-nineteenth century

As a consequence, it is argued, the social work of the churches was relocated 'to catering for a specialised class of citizenry, the religiously-susceptible.'⁴⁰ Certainly attitudes towards poverty had changed and the essentially moral outlook of the churches seemed dated. Increasingly their work was focused on

³⁸ St. Hilda's Parish Record April 1898, enclosed in Scrapbook 14/6.

³⁹ Savage Pastoral Visitation p.122.

⁴⁰ Morris J.N. Religion and Urban Change (Croydon 1840-1914) (Woodbridge, 1992) p.185; p.179.

the immediate relief of women, children and the elderly - arguably 'the religiously susceptible'. Yet this need not suggest that the churches had in some way 'failed' in their mission. Canon Savage's recognition that the state had a part to play in the relief of the poor found support elsewhere in the church, not least in Hastings Rashdall's vision of church and state working alongside each other to promote the good of society at large.⁴¹ In short, the churches were willing to work as a compliment to, rather than in competition with, the secular state. Indeed, the evidence from those smaller communities in which paternalistic employers provided welfare for their employees suggests that the churches had been willing to allow secular agencies to take a leading role in social work throughout this period. To some extent this freed the churches to concentrate on purely spiritual goals; paradoxically it also denied them a valuable means of 'outreach' by which to achieve them.

Education.

The emergence of secular alternatives to church provision in educational matters took place sooner than similar changes in the field of social welfare and was a far more contentious issue. In April 1896 South Shields readers of St. Stephen's parish magazine were informed of a government plan to help voluntary schools, thus relieving them of some of the 'evil results of the unfair competition of Board schools.' Four years later, the vicar of St. Simon's derided the effects of secular

⁴¹ Garnett J. *Hastings Rashdall and the Renewal of Christian Social Ethics c 1890-1920* in Garnett J. and Matthew C. (eds.) Revival and Religion Since 1700 (London, 1993) p.309.

schooling, reporting that the long term effect of elementary education amongst the young people of his parish was simply to make them:

Wise against their will. No desire to acquire knowledge.⁴²

Suggestions that the churches were somehow disadvantaged by the developments in weekday education during this period are by no means confined to contemporary sources. Currie et. al. argue that the growth of secular schooling robbed the churches of their secondary utility as providers of education, thereby diminishing popular awareness of religious matters; for Chadwick, the development of a skilled teaching profession brought about the long term decline of the Sunday school, as lessons planned and executed by ill trained amateurs proved increasingly unpopular amongst youngsters used to the professionalism of the day schools. Cox, of course, extends the thesis further, viewing secular education as a factor in undermining the whole position of the churches.⁴³

Yet to present a picture of churches in conflict with the world of weekday education would be to mislead, not least because of the churches' continuing role as managers and providers of day schools. For the Roman Catholic Church, day schools were vital. Described by Aspinwall as 'an opportunity to determine the character of the future church' they provided a model for self help amongst often migrant communities, giving a positive self perception to children who were frequently from the poorest social classes.⁴⁴ Defended by the Catholic hierarchy

⁴² St. Stephen's Parish Magazine April 1896; Visitation Return St. Simon's 1900.

⁴³ Currie R., Gilbert A. and Horsley L. Churches and Churchgoers Patterns of Church Life in the British Isles since 1700 (Oxford, 1977) p.63; Chadwick O. The Victorian Church vol. 2 (London, 1970) p.192; Cox The English Churches p.190.

⁴⁴ Aspinwall B. *The Child as the Maker of the Ultramontane* in Wood D. (ed.) The Church and Childhood Studies in Church History no. 31 (Oxford, 1994) p.437.

as a means of promulgating and protecting the faith, the schools were central to the church's work in England. As Fr. Greene succinctly told his South Shields parishioners in 1889, 'the best hope of the parish is in the care of the children.'⁴⁵ Catholic parents were told to make their children attend school, though it should be added that a practical concern to maximise the government grant was particularly significant in this. Disadvantaged children were helped to attend, with a committee formally organised to ensure that children of genuinely poor parishioners could have their school pence paid.⁴⁶ The day schools were an object of denominational pride for the Catholic community. In 1890 the parish was informed:

Fr. Greene desires to have our Catholic schools superior to any schools in the town. They should at least be equal in the ordinary teaching and superior by reason of the religious knowledge and Catholic training.⁴⁷

and at the opening of new schools in Derby Terrace in 1913 the Bishop reflected that this was:

an opportunity of displaying our zeal and interest in the teaching of religion in the schools in such a manner as will be an object lesson to our non Catholic brethren.⁴⁸

Nor was Roman Catholic zeal for day education limited to the towns. Newhouse church was opened by Bishop Chadwick in October 1871, but the first Mass of the revived mission was said in July in the school building. By 1875 schools had

⁴⁵ Notice Book 3 25/8/89.

⁴⁶ Notice Book 1 22/1/82.

⁴⁷ Notice Book 4 12/1/90.

⁴⁸ Notice Book 13 24/8/13.

also been built at Cornsay and Ushaw Moor, all at a time when the Established Church was withdrawing from the provision of weekday education in the Deerness Valley. In 1902, Fr. Beech reported that 89% of the valley's 241 Catholic children aged 3-14 were enrolled in the three schools, which had an average attendance rate of 83%.⁴⁹ Significantly, perhaps, a similar concern to provide day education may also be found amongst another ethnic/religious minority group in South Shields, the Jewish community.⁵⁰

The involvement of the Nonconformist churches in day education was not always so direct. The Union British School of South Shields was founded in 1834 as the result of a Congregationalist initiative and was modelled on the Lancasterian system to provide education for poor children who did not wish to attend the church day schools of the town. The Barnes School, sponsored by J.C. Stevenson's Jarrow Chemical Company, was run on similar 'unsectarian' lines. In 1893 the Union British School was taken over by the South Shields School Board; the Barnes School having been handed over ten years before.⁵¹ One Nonconformist congregation did, however, provide day education directly. St. John's English Presbyterian church opened its own day school in 1846 and this later became the first Higher Grade school in the town, the church maintaining its interest in the venture even after the school was reorganised and reopened as a

⁴⁹ For details of Newhouse school and mission, see Milburn D. St. John Boste and the Continuity of Catholicism in the Deerness Valley (Ware, 1993) pp.18-19; Visitation Returns Newhouse 1902.

⁵⁰ See, for example, visit of Rabbi to examine school children in Hebrew, reported in Gazette 17/5/95.

⁵¹ Hodgson G.B. The Borough of South Shields (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1903) pp.414-415.

Higher Grade school with grants from the Education and Science and Art Departments in 1886. The Rev. James Mackenzie was appointed Chairman of the new committee of management and when this body decided that rebuilding was required in 1890, the new school was erected next to the church.⁵²

The Established Church had, typically, run schools in the town from the eighteenth century onwards. Throughout this period there were Anglican elementary schools associated with St. Hilda's, Holy Trinity, St. Mark's, St. Simon's and St. Mary's parishes. Such schools did not aim to unite an existing ethnic/cultural community. Rather, they enabled the Anglican Church to reach otherwise distant groups, as Canon Savage clearly explained in 1892 when writing of the pupils at the Old Charity School - the first public schools of the town managed by the parish church:

These children are chiefly of the very poorest class whom it is impossible to reach by schools or other agencies on Sundays...The value of this opportunity from a moral and spiritual point of view is incalculable, as affording the only practicable means of effective church work amongst the very poor.⁵³

Effective church work meant maintaining close links with the worshipping community of St. Hilda's. As at the Holy Trinity schools, the clergy of St. Hilda's taught lessons themselves and the schoolchildren were catechised in church during Holy Week - as many as 441 taking part in 1895.⁵⁴ Yet if there was 'no more important branch of parish work than the efficient maintenance of our day

⁵² Hodgson South Shields p.424.

⁵³ Letter to parishioners dated July 1892 enclosed in Scrapbook 14/4.

⁵⁴ Visitation Returns St. Hilda and Holy Trinity passim; St. Hilda's Parish Magazine April 1895.

schools',⁵⁵ it was not without its costs. When Canon Savage arrived at St. Hilda's he found an inefficient and badly managed staff, reorganised the management body and sacked three assistant teachers and two student teachers who had failed their examinations. Such measures made possible a saving of £115, though the vicar was obliged to ask his parishioners for a further £250 for the efficient working of the school and to pledge £5 of his own money to match every £45 raised by the parish.⁵⁶

Considerably worse problems beset St. Mark's Schools. Even when the unwholesome influence of the Rev. David Evans is taken into account,⁵⁷ the problems of the parish's schools do illustrate some of the difficulties the churches faced in competing with the Board Schools and help to explain why the Established Church was prepared to hand over some of its educational plant to the secular authorities. St. Stephen's National schools were handed over to the School Board and plans to take them back at the expiry of the Board's lease seem to have come to nothing.⁵⁸ St. Thomas' schools were closed too, the holding of classes on the ground floor of the church proving too much for the congregation who were 'repeatedly remonstrating against it' in 1870.⁵⁹ Elsewhere, however, schools were taken back under church control. St. Mary's schools were restored

⁵⁵ St. Hilda's Parish Magazine March 1893.

⁵⁶ Canon Savage in a letter to parishioners dated July 1892. Enclosed in Scrapbook 14/4.

⁵⁷ See above pp.117-123.

⁵⁸ St. Stephen's Parish Magazine January 1898.

⁵⁹ Visitation Return St. Thomas's 1870.

to the church in 1896 when the Board's lease on the buildings had expired - eight years later they reported an average attendance of 750.⁶⁰

The difficulties facing denominational education were even greater in rural areas than in the cities, where the problems posed by a large uneducated mass were acutely obvious and spurred on the churches' involvement. In the Deerness Valley, for example, the Established Church withdrew from the provision of day education. Waterhouses church school had been given up by 1882, its pupils attended the schools which Pease and Partners had provided in 1863. The survival of the church schools in Esh parish may be explained by the lateness of the company's provision of a school for Esh Winning in 1892.⁶¹ In short, unlike the Catholic church, the Church of England appears to have been willing to accept secular provision of education in areas where a genuine paternalistic concern was shown and where the cost of Anglican provision seemed to provide only unnecessary duplication. Middleton parish provides further evidence of this. The Church of England had boasted two day schools in Middleton in 1870, but the attempts of the Curate in Charge to finance the erection of new school buildings in 1874 met with difficulties as he reported to the Bishop:

I have so far been very unsuccessful owing to the poverty of the parish and the carelessness of the landlords and distant employers of labour to the place's spiritual welfare.⁶²

The Rev. Mr. Tilston's comments do betray a certain denominational partiality given the Lead Company's investment in education from 1819 onwards and the

⁶⁰ Hodgson South Shields p.417; Visitation Return St. Mary's 1904.

⁶¹ Emery N. The Deerness Valley: History of Settlement in a Durham Valley (Durham University Department of Archaeology, Occasional Paper no. 9, Durham, 1989) p.186.

⁶² Visitation Returns Middleton 1874.

stipulation that all who attended school should also attend a Sunday school or place of worship on a Sunday, but their general import - that in smaller communities where the Established Church was bereft of significant financial patronage the provision of weekday education was difficult - do ring true. By 1882 the Church's schools in Middleton were closed. One final point about Teesdale should be made. In the genuinely rural communities of the Dale, the Anglican church remained an important provider of day education, its function sustained by tradition and by the lack of an alternative secular provider. Patronage too could support the church schools - at Eggleston the school house was the private property of Thomas Hutchinson and at Forest the Duke of Cleveland made an annual subscription to the school's expenses. His successor, Lord Barnard, similarly contributed to Newbiggen school and when some parents in the village failed to pay their school pence in 1900 the question of a school board for the village was raised. The Teesdale Mercury reported:

It is our firm opinion that the ratepayers would be going against their best interests if they decided to have a school board with its attendant cost and maintenance...of course, a small rate is necessary, even if all the school pence is paid, and yet it is hardly in the nature of things that men should have to pay for the education of their neighbours' children.⁶³

Such a choice was not available in larger areas such as South Shields, where a school board existed from 1870 onwards, nor in Middleton, which also had its own school board. The existence of a board, however, did not imply the ending of religious influence in education. Rather, school board politics - in both South Shields and Middleton - witnessed significant religious rivalry and

⁶³ Mercury 5/12/00.

contention. Religion was not the exclusive issue dominant in educational politics - in 1895 a socialist was elected to the South Shields Board - but denominational rivalry was clearly of importance in education throughout this period as Canon Savage's 1891 circular about the Catholic threat in school board elections shows.⁶⁴ Such concern for the result of board elections underlines the continuing importance of day education even when provided by apparently secular authorities. As late as 1901, the Ocean Rd. Congregationalist Guild still found educational politics a matter of general concern, organising a mock school board election fought between the Unsectarian and Church parties and won, perhaps not surprisingly, by the former.⁶⁵ The precise details of board politics are beyond the scope of this study - as an illustration of their complexity suffice it to say that Canon Savage came under criticism from other Anglicans for canvassing across the town on behalf of St. Hilda's in 1895⁶⁶ - but the fact that the churches invested such time and effort in them shows that education was in no way 'marginalised' during the 1890s. Indeed, in 1892 Canon Savage organised a trip to the Roman Wall for all members of the School Board, providing dinner at his own expense at the George Hotel, Chollerford.⁶⁷ In Teesdale too, the history of the school board is one of a religious rivalry, between Anglican and Nonconformist. In 1879 the vicar of St. Mary's referred to the work of dissenters from outside the town who had laboured to prevent the election of Church candidates and described the leader of the group as:

⁶⁴ See above p.130

⁶⁵ Ocean Road Congregationalist Guild Minutes 30/1/01.

⁶⁶ Gazette 11/1/95.

⁶⁷ Typed circular of 27/6/90 included in Scrapbook 14/5.

fizzling about like an erratic comet that had strayed beyond the limits of its own proper orbit - all gas and tail, without any solid nucleus in the shape of a head - and trying to work mischief, fortunately without doing much damage by his impertinent interference⁶⁸

Of course, none of this is to deny that, as the period progressed and secular education became the norm, then the churches became - at best - one amongst a number of interested parties in the educational field. Yet the continuing part played by religion in educational matters was underlined clearly by the disputes over the Education Act of 1902. This drew nonconformist opposition in each of the communities studied. In South Shields, three ministers were sent to prison for refusing to pay the education component of their rates bill in 1905. On their release from prison, the Rev. Ogden was quick to point out the reason for their imprisonment. Alleging that about 90% of magistrates throughout the country had accepted part payment of rates, he accused the Shields magistrates of personal animosity towards the accused, political bias or ecclesiastical prejudice. The Revs. W. Reed, T. Barnes and E. Mason:

had been sent to gaol because the wealthiest church in the world
had chosen to come upon the poor rate

Such, indeed, was the depth of feeling on this issue that the Rev. Mr. Hopkins, Mason's successor at the Emmanuel Baptist Free Church, was still appearing in front of local magistrates for non-payment of rates as late as 1910.⁶⁹ In the Deerness Valley, whilst the passive resisters were not sent to prison, the auction

⁶⁸ Mercury 5/2/79.

⁶⁹ Gazette 5/4/05 and 6/5/10.

of their goods to pay fines drew a large crowd in 1905⁷⁰ and in Teesdale too the controversy was a matter of public concern, though three passive resisters there were more fortunate in their magistrates than their colleagues in South Shields, being, as they were:

courteously recognised from the bench by Lord Barnard⁷¹

at a hearing in 1905.

If the passive resisters of the early twentieth century marked - in some ways - a last revival of the Nonconformist Conscience, then the Established Church showed its continuing concern for educational politics in its reaction to the Liberal Education Bill of 1906. Canon Bilbrough's comments on Clause VI of the Birrell Bill serve not only as a reflection of the Church's view on this particular issue, but also as a commentary on religious attitudes to day schooling as a whole:

He pointed to the colony of Victoria and the results there of the abolition of the Bible from the schools. When there was religious teaching in the day schools, 70% of the children attended Sabbath schools, but when it was banished only 40% attended the Sunday school. The abolition of religious instruction in our schools would mean that an increasing number of our children would grow up without any religious education at all.⁷²

In short, either by direct provision or indirect influence through the school boards, the churches maintained an important - if diminishing - interest in day

⁷⁰ Chronicle 15/9/05.

⁷¹ Mercury 16/8/05.

⁷² Press cutting 8/6/06 in Scrapbook 14/7.

education throughout this period lest its complete secularisation would leave children without any religious influences as they matured.

Conclusions.

Involvement in educational and social welfare work constituted a mission to those not otherwise involved in church activities. Even if this did not lead to fuller pews, it might, at least, help to create a positive view of the church as an institution. As the period progressed, however, secular provision for education and welfare needs developed apace. Voluntary religious organisations lacked the financial resources and the professional skills required to keep up, not only with changing practices, but also with the greater numbers of people requiring help. Whilst the churches were not so unaware of the nature and causes of poverty as some have suggested, their methods of dealing with the problem continued to depend on charitable giving and looked to tackle the symptoms, rather than the causes, of poverty. Many also tended towards a theory which saw immoral behaviour as the cause of individual misfortune. Yet it would be wrong to write off the churches' work. The South Shields churches - particularly the Anglican churches - had provided poor relief in the town when few alternatives existed. That the Deerness Valley and Teesdale churches did not provide similar welfare schemes is largely a reflection of the nature of those communities and of the paternalistic practices of the largest local employers. Yet evidence from both communities also suggests that the churches undertook welfare work as a result of necessity rather than of choice. Where acceptable secular provision existed the churches were willing to avoid direct involvement in welfare work. In education, the picture is complicated by continuing denominational rivalry and by the

significance attached to religious education as a means of preserving the churches' future; both encouraged the continuing involvement of the churches in day schooling. In this field as in social welfare, however, any suggestion that 'secularisation' meant an immediate and inevitable reduction in the churches' influence is misleading. It is perhaps, better to see a process by which secular provision grew alongside church activity.

Conclusions and Implications.

Introduction.

The trend of much recent research into the history of the churches during the later Victorian and Edwardian period has been to challenge the widespread acceptance of 'decline' which underlay many earlier studies. McLeod, for instance, has concluded that:

In England during the period from 1850 to 1914 a relatively high degree of religious consensus existed, which had diminished by the early twentieth century but had not yet broken down.

Whilst 'English Protestantism' had failed to 'seize the imagination of the poor', England was, nevertheless, 'overwhelmingly a Christian and Protestant nation.'¹ Brown argues that a notion of 'decline' is not consistent with the evidence of the period before 1880 at the earliest and arguably not before 1910 and that any decline in formal church attendance was 'mild' until the 1950s. In a provocatively optimistic vein he contends that religion played a central role in working class culture and values until the mid twentieth century.² Green is rather more circumspect, acknowledging that membership of religious associations in the West Yorkshire communities of his study did not keep pace with population growth in the period after 1890, but he nevertheless shares the essentially optimistic interpretation that:

¹ McLeod H. Religion and Society in England 1850-1914 (London, 1996) pp.1-2.

² Brown C.G. 'The Mechanism of Religious Growth in Urban Societies: British Cities Since the Eighteenth Century' in McLeod H. (ed.) European Religion in the Age of the Great Cities (London, 1995) pp.239-262.

There appears to have been no particular decline in religious association or affiliation locally until well after the end of the First World War.³

The findings of this study are, in many ways, consistent with these broadly optimistic conclusions. They are, however, based on specific local data and must be regarded first and foremost as the peculiar experience of the three communities studied. This conclusion attempts to compare and contrast the history of the churches in these communities in order to make possible a contribution to the broader picture of the place of religious organisations in society.

Members, attendance and the problem of sources.

That debate as to the fortunes of the churches during this period should still be possible has much to do with the nature of available evidence. Pessimistic interpretations of the churches' role have pointed to statistical evidence to support their claims that the churches were 'in decline'. Currie et al. employed church membership statistics to support their analysis of general patterns of church growth and Chadwick reports falling membership and attendance figures for various denominations in her study of Bradford.⁴ The use of such statistics, however, presents problems both of availability and interpretation. Currie et al. recognised that some statistics of religion might be unreliable; Green, more

³ Green S.J.D. Religion in the Age of Decline: Organisation and Experience in Industrial West Yorkshire 1870-1920 (Cambridge, 1996) p.363.

⁴ Currie R., Gilbert A. and Horsley L. Churches and Churchgoers Patterns of Church Life in the British Isles since 1700 (Oxford, 1977) chapter 2 and passim.; Chadwick R.E. 'Churches and People in Bradford and District 1880-1914: The Protestant Churches in an Urban Industrial Environment.' (University of Oxford D. Phil. thesis, 1986) chapter 3 and passim.

recently, has discovered that statistical evidence at a local level is 'remarkably incomplete'.⁵ The evidence for the communities of this study confirms this, particularly with regard to South Shields. Confirmation lists from St. Hilda's, South Shields, for example, show significant fluctuations, but these reflect the fact that, as the mother church of the town, St. Hilda's was used for confirmations for other parishes too; any attempt to analyse the 'strength' of St. Hilda's parish on the basis of this evidence would be dangerously misleading.⁶ Some statistics do exist, however, for both the Deerness Valley and upper Teesdale and in some ways they support pessimistic interpretations of the churches' fortunes during the 'first two decades of the twentieth century. Membership of the Waterhouses Primitive Methodist Circuit, for example, fell towards the end of the period studied (from a high point of 358 in 1904 to 283 in 1913). Yet some of this may be accounted for by the scaling down of mining at Hedley Hope from 1904 onwards resulting in the loss of 20 members from that station. At Lymington Terrace, on the other hand, the 32 members of 1911 were only two fewer than the previous highest figure of 1899 whilst membership at Esh Colliery peaked at 108 as late as 1910.⁷ In Teesdale, where Primitive Methodist membership at Middleton was falling faster than the population of the town, the decline in membership at Forest was less rapid than the fall in population.⁸ The percentage of the total number of Roman Catholics in the Deerness Valley who attended Easter Mass (the most reliably measured of the

⁵ Currie et al. Churches and Churchgoers pp.14-20; Green Religion in the Age of Decline p.363.

⁶ St. Hilda's Parish Confirmation Registers 1884-1902.

⁷ Waterhouses PMC Returns 1892-1912.

⁸ Middleton PMC Returns 1897-1914.

church's indices of attendance) appears to have been steady throughout the period; in South Shields the percentage of Easter communicants amongst the Catholic population increased at St. Bede's and stood at over 60% of the Tyne Dock congregation in 1911 - a figure compatible with the rural figure for the Newhouse mission in the Deerness Valley and the highest percentage recorded for Tyne Dock throughout its history.⁹ Evidence from the Established Church is more qualitative in nature, but visitation returns do point to a continuing confidence about the strength of Anglicanism which often served to point up contemporary worries amongst Protestant Nonconformity. The revival of Anglican fortunes under the Rev. Mr. Yates Rooker in Middleton which took place in a context of falling membership amongst the town's Primitive Methodists also suggests that a revived Anglicanism could present a direct challenge to Protestant nonconformity.¹⁰ Firmer evidence - albeit anecdotal and subjective - may be found in the Anglican visitation returns for 1892. A widespread feeling that the Established Church was gaining at the expense of Nonconformist churches in South Shields is evident in responses to a question on relations with other denominations. Canon Savage at St. Hilda's recognised 'a remarkable return of nonconformists to the church'; from Holy Trinity the Anglican Church was reported to be 'the only body making progress'; at St. Thomas' the movement was 'well away from Nonconformity' and at St. Michael's the Rev. Mr. Adamson reported that:

the church appears to me to possess very much of the religious feeling which formerly belonged to the Nonconformists

⁹ See Appendix D.

¹⁰ See above p.156.

At St. Jude's a movement towards the Established Church and away from Dissent was said to be evident, fuelled by the general acknowledgement of the church's awakened life. Dissenters were reported to be attending Anglican services in increasing numbers and, indeed, to be seeking confirmation within the Established church. The Rev. Henry Morton replied from St. Stephen's that Nonconformity was not increasing, but that the Roman Catholic church was attracting more support, a feeling echoed in the return from St. Thomas's parish.¹¹ This picture is in keeping with the broader picture of Nonconformist difficulties recorded, amongst others, by Cox and with McLeod's recent suggestion that the larger Protestant Nonconformist sects were most affected by the 'clear downward trend in urban churchgoing' which 'set in some time between 1881 and 1902'.¹² Conversely, in both the Deerness Valley and Teesdale, Anglican incumbents reported no shift away from Dissent save at Waterhouses where there was said to be some movement away from Nonconformity 'owing to the increased activity amongst church workers'. Elsewhere the strength of dissent in these rural communities remained untouched in 1892 and helped to shape the whole religious atmosphere of the villages, as the vicar of Hamsteels explained in his visitation return of 1904:

When there were more pronounced Wesleyans [in the village] than there are now our church was fullest.¹³

Indeed, the particular strength of Protestant Nonconformity in both the Deerness Valley and upper Teesdale suggests that both of these areas witnessed

¹¹ Visitation Returns St. Hilda; Holy Trinity; St. Thomas's; St. Michael; St. Jude; St. Stephen 1892.

¹² Cox J. The English Churches in a Secular Society: Lambeth 1870-1930 (New York, 1982) pp.225-265; McLeod Religion and Society p.172.

¹³ Visitation Returns 1892 passim and Hamsteels 1904.

participation in religious activity on a much wider scale than did South Shields. From Waterhouses in 1904 the Rev. Mr. Smith reported that 'it would appear that the proportion of those who attend no place of worship is comparatively small'; eight years later the Rev. Mr. Randle reported from Forest in Teesdale that:

There is a strong religious feeling amongst the people in the dale and I have reason to believe that family prayer is generally practised.¹⁴

Comments on the comparative extent of religious involvement in the communities studied must remain tentative in the light of the lack of firm corroborative evidence; nevertheless, the suggestion that both Teesdale and the Deerness Valley were areas in which religion played an important role is not at odds with much of the other evidence about the two areas. Significantly, perhaps, the strength of Protestant Nonconformity implied a firm commitment to religious activity whilst the general trend for greater religious activity in rural rather than urban areas is upheld by the evidence of the Roman Catholic statistics which permit the only direct comparisons of the whole study. In short, local and denominational fluctuations make it difficult to find hard statistical evidence to support unequivocally any suggestion that, overall, the churches were in decline. Yet there is also sufficient evidence of falling numbers of both church members and of those attending church services in each of the three communities studied to explain some of the concerns which were being expressed by those within the churches about decline.

¹⁴ Visitation Returns Waterhouses 1904; Forest 1912.

The South Shields churches and the 'associational model'.

Yet even where statistics do exist, they do not, necessarily, present the full picture of the 'health' of the churches during this period. Certainly those within the contemporary churches regarded statistics as important and were concerned at the message of decline which they seemed to present. Yet the churches' objectives were far reaching ones and failure to achieve them was perhaps not remarkable. Church leaders of all denominations sought the widest possible participation in the whole range of church activities. True some, such as the Roman Catholics, were confined by ethnic or historical forces to particular groups of the population and no other group had quite the comprehensive mission of the Established Church - but all looked to maximise support from within their particular constituency. No-one need be beyond the salvation which was to be found within the churches. Yet if the churches' aim was to include every-one within the orbit of their activities, they were almost inevitably to be disappointed in their results since this aim was, essentially, an unrealistic one. In setting out to achieve this objective, however, the churches were performing what they saw as God's mission and they carried out their task with a growing degree of sophistication.

Essentially the churches seemed to have recognised that participation and affiliation could take various forms. Membership, conscious support, usually involving financial commitment to the churches, represented the most desirable form in Nonconformity, if not in the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches where formal membership was less clearly defined. Attendance at public worship

measured a more limited and variable commitment to the churches. Regularly-attending non-members - the hearers of nonconformist records - were clearly more committed individuals than those who attended only the great festivals or such occasions of 'civic religion' as the Hospital Sunday or Mayor's Sunday services in South Shields. Beyond members and attenders lay a third group which the churches recognised as, in some ways, affiliated to their activities. These were the people who attended the various auxiliary activities which the churches sponsored during this period which Green sees as central to the 'associational ideal' of late nineteenth century religious organisations which:

permitted a social and cultural scope by the church beyond its strictly spiritual mission¹⁵

Some of these auxiliary organisations were at the edge of the churches' sphere of influence and were not without their critics inside the churches.¹⁶ Yet the alternative to such institutes was, presumably, a secular culture dominated by the public house to which the potentially 'respectable' might be lost. To counter this threat, most of the churches of South Shields involved themselves in the organisation of 'auxiliary activities' to a greater or lesser extent. Some looked to service and reinforce their existing supporters, especially those churches whose constituencies were circumscribed by ethnic origins, such as the Presbyterians or - perhaps more obviously - the Roman Catholics. For others, most notably the Anglican Church, auxiliary activities sought to draw into the church's orbit those otherwise excluded. Of course, the churches as organisations were sufficiently sophisticated to recognise that different groups had their particular needs - hence the existence of the Young Men's Club and the West St. Boys' Club at St. Hilda's.

¹⁵ Green *Religion in the Age of Decline* p.184.

¹⁶ See above p.250.

Some 'auxiliaries' were close to the centre of the churches' life, most notably the choirs which played an increasingly important role in the services of all denominations. In their broadest sense, however, auxiliary activities formed a lowest common denominator of church participation and a means of ensuring 'respectable' behaviour amongst as wide a range of the population as possible.

Respectability was a concept to which all could aspire, though one which is difficult to define as it was contingent upon both denominational and local factors. Given that the churches held differing views on the question of alcohol, it is, perhaps, not surprising that other matters such as dancing and cards could cause disputes between and within denominations. In one sense, however, the puritanical attitudes towards respectability displayed by the more 'proletarian' denominations serve only to underline that respectability was not a purely class issue. Eschewing alcohol was possible for the respectable working classes - indeed, teetotalism removed potentially significant expenditure on drink. The Salvation Army, the Primitive Methodists and the Gospel Temperance Union all illustrate that the churches could appeal to working class respectability; to argue that these denominations imposed middle class culture on their followers is to demean both the churches and their members. Whilst its understanding of 'respectable' behaviour was markedly different, the Roman Catholic church also proved that the working classes were in no way 'lost' *en masse* to the churches whilst the building of missions by both the Established Church and such 'plebeian' nonconformist churches as the Wesleyan Methodists and Presbyterians underlines Green's conclusions that the churches recognised the need to appeal to a socially diverse urban community in which the working classes were the majority.

By appealing to such communities through the medium of auxiliary organisations the churches lay themselves open to accusations that they had forsaken their spiritual objectives. The mutual improvement societies of the 1870s and 1880s, however, reflected a desire for educational advancement, often linked to biblical study and spiritual improvement. Music frequently served a spiritual purpose with sacred cantatas and concerts, and sport was defended as both a respectable pastime and a means of inculcating moral fibre - frequently as a means of emphasising desirable national characteristics of fair play and physical fitness. As providers of entertainment, the churches were in a more ambiguous position, open to the charge of resorting to unsuitable methods in order to win support, as the Rev. P.A. Woods explained in his Anglican critique of nonconformist practices in his parish:

In my opinion their religious influence is not healthy. One sees "Musical Treats" and what may be justly called "shows" advertised on, e.g., Easter Day.¹⁷

Yet even such activities were seen by their promoters as a worthwhile alternative to the public house and commercial, secular provision, as the Rev. Mr. Evans explained from St. Aidan's, South Shields in 1892:

During leisure time the evil minded, the infidel, the drunkard etc. do their work. If we can manage to preside over their [young people's] leisure time, the rest is easy. It is the best antidote for betting and drunkenness.¹⁸

The churches' involvement in social welfare work - albeit on a limited scale - also sprang from a desire to encompass the whole life experience within the frame of church based activities and to spread the Good News of the Gospel through a

¹⁷ Visitation Return St. Mark's 1912.

¹⁸ Visitation Return St. Aidan's 1892.

'diffusive Christianity' which, it was hoped, would win more to the cause of the churches and away from the irreligion and unbelief.

The 'associational model' in the rural context.

Thus far the evidence of the study has much in common with Green's findings in West Yorkshire. What of the 'associational ideal' in a rural environment ? Some of the fears which motivated the churches' actions in urban settings were less pressing in the Deerness Valley and upper Teesdale. The small size of the rural communities coupled with the presence of paternalistic employers in both areas meant that each was less prone to the anonymity and consequent lack of social control which seemed to be a significant feature of big city life. As a consequence, the pressure on the churches to establish community norms of behaviour was less acute. True the coal mining villages of the Deerness Valley had experienced a rapid expansion early in the period and developed as more settled communities only as the period progressed, yet they were, nevertheless, well established communities by the turn of the twentieth century. The involvement of Pease and Partners in establishing a settled pattern of life in the villages, through the provision of educational and leisure facilities, for example, is highlighted by the relative instability of villages like Ushaw Moor where the mining companies were less benevolent in their actions. The economic prosperity of the Deerness Valley also meant that the problem of abject poverty which dismayed many of the church workers in South Shields and which, as Yeo has shown, acted as a barrier to active participation in church activities - other than in the receipt of charity - was less of a problem in the valley. Those slum areas populated by casual labourers, the unemployed, strays and prostitutes which even the optimistic Green recognises were 'all but lost to the missionary work of the

Protestant churches by the turn of the twentieth century' were simply not present in the valley.¹⁹ In short, the Pease villages were regarded as being a fertile ground for church work. Waterhouses, for example, was described in 1882 as having morals 'much better than in many parts of agricultural England'; ten years later a second incumbent reported that the Lord's Day was 'fairly well observed in this parish.'²⁰ In Teesdale, similar prosperity was by no means guaranteed and by the end of the period the whole infrastructure of the London Lead Company's paternalistic employment practices had collapsed. Nevertheless, the valley was noted as an area of stability, of mature communities with established patterns of life, significantly different from the urban environment of South Shields and, again, without the depths of poverty evident in urban areas. The withdrawal of the London Lead Company brought great changes, but the emergence of other employers - notably Ord and Maddison's quarry - and the continued importance of large scale landowners - such as Lord Barnard - coupled with the widespread practice of agricultural by-employment meant that even the collapse of the staple industry did not totally undermine the social cohesion of the dale. Practical difficulties further shaped the development of church life in the villages. Parts of the Deerness Valley and of Teesdale remained geographically isolated throughout this period and this made the development of sporting clubs, for example, difficult to contemplate. Indeed, visitation returns for both Forest in Teesdale and Hamsteels in the Deerness Valley point to the problems of attracting congregations to buildings physically distant from changed population centres. In both parishes, Sunday schools - the first and arguably the most important auxiliary organisation of the churches - suffered because scholars were unable to

¹⁹ Green Religion in the Age of Decline p.84.

²⁰ Visitation Returns Waterhouses 1882; 1892.

walk the distances required to attend lessons. Isolation also meant that the rural churches were not always part of a 'multi-chapel community'²¹ which not only provided a stimulus to develop and change in competition with other churches but also provided those exemplars of behaviour which create fashionable patterns of activity. A further practical constraint for the rural churches lay in their inability to raise the sums of money which were possible for the urban churches. Bazaars, in particular, rarely raised the scale of funds which was possible in the towns. As a result financing of auxiliary activities was more difficult. Conscious decisions further shaped the nature of church life in rural areas. For Green, the movement towards an 'associational' model of church life involved the rejection of earlier practices. Purely revivalist methods, for example, were less commonly used as a means of recruitment after 1900. Whilst the evidence from South Shields supports these findings, that from the rural communities - and Teesdale in particular - does not. In these rural areas missions were still seen as an appropriate response to falling church membership rolls; in the Deerness Valley too a month long evangelistic mission was reported to have 'replenished' the membership of the Hedley Hill Wesleyan Society as late as 1905.²² Green also sees the class system of Methodism as a victim of changing liturgical and organisational practices but in Teesdale the class system continued throughout the period, with a class leaders' convention planned for 1909, a year before the circuit reported its 'most encouraging numerical report for years' in 1910.²³ Similarly pew rents continued to play a significant part in rural Methodist finances. The Teesdale Wesleyans agreed to 'maintain a reasonable system of seat

²¹ The phrase is from Green Religion in the Age of Decline

²² Chronicle 14/4/05

²³ TWC Minute Book 11/9/09; 13/3/10.

rents' in 1908. At Eggleston seats were held in the Wesleyan chapel as late as 1926, though not all were rented.²⁴ The Deerness Valley Primitive Methodists did abolish seat rents and replaced them with an envelope system of regular giving, but not until 1909, significantly later than the 1890s which Green records as witnessing the main shift away from pew renting in West Yorkshire.²⁵ The Teesdale Methodists also continued the tradition of the Camp Meeting and Love Feast for longer than their fellows in the Deerness Valley - Forest and Middleton Primitive Methodists societies each held such meetings in 1905.²⁶ In short, then, whilst the churches of the Deerness Valley and Upper Teesdale did create auxiliary organisations, they rarely displayed the variety of their urban counterparts and patterns of a much older form of religious practice survived much longer in these areas - notably in upper Teesdale - than in the urban centre of South Shields.

The churches' fears of 'decline'

How effective was the 'associational model' for the churches of late Victorian and Edwardian England ? In part, at least, the widespread fear of 'decline' was a reaction to the apparent failure of this style of religious organisation to achieve its objectives. Not only were fewer people attending religious services and committing themselves to membership of the various

²⁴ Eggleston Wesleyan Chapel List of Seat Holders 1898-1926.

²⁵ Green Religion in the Age of Decline pp.152 ff.

²⁶ See above p.159.

churches, but alternative providers were beginning to undermine the churches' attempts to shape community life. On the one hand the development of commercial and voluntary secular organisations challenged the attempts of religious organisations to direct leisure activities. As early as 1892 the incumbent of Holy Trinity South Shields reported that:

bicycle clubs lead to Sabbath desecration and you cannot go near any football field without hearing foul language

In the same year his colleague at St. Mary's reported that there were too many football, cricket and bicycling clubs within the parish, none of which were connected to the church.²⁷ Seven years earlier the borough M.P. spoke publicly of the widespread enthusiasm for 'that rather boisterous game' and of a 'football mania' in the town. In 1890 the Gazette reported that the same sport 'almost entirely monopolises attention right now.'²⁸ Of course, the churches had tapped into this popularity for their own ends, but they faced increasing competition from clubs whose whole *rationale* was the provision of sporting facilities and competition, especially in an age in which leisure had become an end in itself as the Gazette explained in 1905:

Today many of us...pursue our recreations with a feverish energy and exhausting devotion which we would never dream of devoting to our business.²⁹

The views of Mr. Bridgett, a Sunderland footballer, reported in 1910, aimed to point the way to further exploitation of this enthusiasm by the churches:

²⁷ Visitation Returns Holy Trinity and St. Mary's 1892.

²⁸ Gazette 20/4/85; 10/10/90.

²⁹ *ibid.* 13/6/05.

It took a very fine man to be a footballer; morally, spiritually and physically he must be a fit man otherwise he was no good for football. That alone should make the churches take an increased interest in football.³⁰

Yet such opinions might equally be seen as a indicative of a shift in opinion thanks to which sport had become an end in itself as much as a means to a spiritual end. Whilst this was not entirely true, the exploitation of sporting activity, especially when coupled with rather jingoistic views of national superiority, did risk diluting the central spiritual message of the churches.

In entertainment commercial activities provided further choice. At Christmas 1890 South Shields witnessed a variety of attractions not sponsored by the churches of the town. The Theatre Royal was showing a dress rehearsal of its pantomime, a skating rink was open to the public and a music hall at Thornton's Variety Theatre was 'crowded to excess'.³¹ None of this is to suggest that the churches were necessarily 'in decline'; the associational model itself was based on the assumption that counter attractions would exist. Further, some of these counter attractions were not, in themselves, unacceptable to all the churches and, indeed, may have been preferable to the free-and-easy entertainment on offer in the public houses. Yet they do show that the churches did not exercise a monopoly in the provision of entertainment. Commercial pressures encouraged the development of Sunday activities which undermined the Sabbatarian inclinations of church people of all denominations. In 1900 the argument for Sunday opening of libraries and museums was couched in terms apparently favourable to the churches. Sunday opening of such amenities would prevent

³⁰ Gazette 28/3/10.

³¹ *ibid.* 26/12/90.

young men drifting into the bars and street corners which provided the only entertainment on Sundays. Opening on Sundays was justified by 'Juventus' who argued:

the Sabbath was made for man and not for man to fit any theory of what it ought to be, however well meant the interpretation may be

Ten years later a Gazette editorial criticised of the trial of two Seaham Harbour men for selling mineral water and ice cream to Sunday visitors to the town. The men's accusers represented:

the short sighted policy of some people who think that by putting in force the irritating machinery of an old and obsolete Act they can stop Sunday excursions and Sunday pleasure.³²

That the devoutly nonconformist Gazette could publish such views, tinged as they were with opposition to pure Sabbatarian principles, suggests that the battle for Sunday observance was lost; for many this represented a further 'decline' in public acceptance of religion, though it should be added that when the Rev. W. Yates' sermon at the Queen St. Methodist Free Church was interrupted by a band playing what he referred to as 'any kind of rubbish in the street' he was taken to task in the Gazette by 'one of the disturbers' who pointed out that this was the Salvation Army band:

men who have been lifted out of the mire and the clay and [who] are playing for the salvation of others who are like ourselves.³³

Clearly, for some, the evangelistic impulse outweighed the desire to promote a quiet Sunday. The emergence of the state as a provider of material welfare was,

³² Gazette 24/3/00; 16/7/10.

³³ *ibid.* 14 + 16/8/05.

perhaps, less immediately challenging to the churches since their capacity to tackle the social problems caused by unemployment and poverty was never proven, but it nevertheless marked a further erosion of any claim to be fully comprehensive 'associations' and placed the churches in an environment in which they were one amongst several groups competing for both human and financial resources.

The problems posed by alternative provision were not confined to urban centres like South Shields. In each of the rural areas studied a secular culture developed as the communities matured and threatened the churches' attempts to control the patterns of behaviour outside work. In 1890 the Durham Chronicle reported that many natives of Waterhouses had left the village at Easter to visit their relatives. Whilst the chapels organised Good Friday teas:

still sticking to the old custom...On Monday the pleasure seekers flocked to Durham City and other surrounding towns.³⁴

By 1910 the working men's clubs epitomised the challenge to the churches' influence in leisure provision, as witnessed by the Esh Winning Working Men's club expedition to Redcar and Saltburn.³⁵ Secular sports clubs and flower shows also showed that the churches were facing competition in the rural as well as urban areas. They also suggested that the paternalistic employment practices which had so coloured the development of both areas and which were in marked contrast to the situation in South Shields were also no longer so all pervasive as they had been in the earlier period; as a consequence the support for the churches which the paternalists had given also declined.

³⁴ Chronicle 11/4/90.

³⁵ See above p.258.

To what extent were fears of decline promoted by a lack of belief amongst the population at large ? McLeod certainly sees this as an important feature, recognising atheists and agnostics as a separate component of the religious landscape of the period, albeit as a minority group.³⁶ In South Shields, the evidence would seem to suggest that atheism was at its strongest during the 1880s and early 1890s when men in particular were targeted by secularist propaganda in the workplace. Some saw this as a continuing problem. From St. Mark's parish in 1912 the Rev. P.A. Woods reported that:

The real centre of danger is probably in the workshops, lodges etc. where religious and social topics are being keenly discussed often, from what I can gather, in an atmosphere unfavourable to revealed religion.³⁷

Other Anglican clergymen were more sanguine about the extent of unbelief in the town. Most argued that active attempts to spread an atheist creed were less common by the early twentieth century. Reporting from St. Hilda's in 1900 Canon Savage noted that active opposition to the churches was less commonplace than it had been seven or eight years previously when secularists had hired public halls and theatres to spread their message. In 1900 the commonest attacks were made by a small number of educated theosophists whilst the tracts which were circulated in certain public houses and sometimes brought to Canon Savage had, he believed, little influence.³⁸ Indeed, promotion of atheistic ideas required an effort to 'reconvert' a largely working class population from the exposure to Christian doctrines they had acquired through education in

³⁶ McLeod Religion and Society pp.47-52.

³⁷ Visitation Return St. Mark's 1912.

³⁸ Visitation Return St. Hilda's 1900.

both day and - for most - Sunday school. This was, of course, not an impossible task, but the would be evangelists would have to overcome the 'indifference' to spiritual matters which so many churchmen saw as a significantly greater threat to the progress of religion than atheism or direct opposition. The recently appointed vicar of St. Aidan's South Shields glumly concluded in 1912 that most of his parishioners manifested a:

supine indifference to all theories and creeds. Life is wholly, for large numbers, materialistic.³⁹

Herein lay a significant cause of concern for all religious organisations which had espoused the associational model. From St. Michael's parish in 1900 the incumbent reported an 'absolute indifference' to religion; eight years later the parishioners of St. Mark's were described as 'not unfriendly [to the clergy] - but they don't seem to think it [religion] matters much.'⁴⁰

In the more rural areas, opinion is less clear cut. For some, indifference remained a problem. From Esh parish in 1900 the Rev. Mr. White reported that 'the chief evil (which is gigantic) is indifference'; four years later the vicar of Eggleston informed the bishop that 'indifferentism is our curse.'⁴¹ Comments by successive vicars of Esh, however, suggest that, in that village at least, indifference did not equate to irreligion. In 1892 parishioners were reported to hold vague views about religion - ' "We are all aiming for the same place" seems to sum up their views'. The Rev. H. Davies' more detailed analysis of the situation dates from sixteen years later:

³⁹ Visitation Return St. Aidan's 1912.

⁴⁰ Visitation Returns St. Michael's 1900; St. Mark's 1908.

⁴¹ Visitation Returns Esh 1900; Eggleston 1904.

The unconscious creed of the people is GOD, a hereafter and JESUS is a good man. Little else but what is vague. People have to be taught to believe. Indifference is based on doubt. They don't care because they don't know.⁴²

On the one hand views such as this help to explain why some in the churches felt that their work was failing and their influence in decline. On the other hand, the Rev. Mr. Davies' views reflect the extent to which Christian doctrines - albeit imperfectly understood - remained central to the thoughts of many of his parishioners. Significantly, perhaps, both Teesdale and Deerness Valley visitation returns list Nonconformists as the main threats to the church as late as 1904. In Middleton Primitive and Wesleyan Methodists provided 'hidden opposition' to the church's work; in Esh there was 'little infidel propaganda' in 1904, but 'excessive, ignorant revivalism' which left a 'residuum of utter unbelief'.⁴³ In both parishes, the persistence of basic Christian belief seems to have been such that the Anglican church was still fighting other denominations as its main enemy, rather than atheist views. Whether socialist ideas began to challenge the position of the churches in the way Green has detected in West Yorkshire is less clear. From the Deerness Valley the Rev. Mr. Davies did report that agnostic socialism was a growing threat to the church in Esh in 1908 and the Rev. G.W. Smith's 1904 return from Waterhouses speaks of a renewal of infidel propaganda in the working men's clubs which may have been linked to socialist ideas.⁴⁴ Yet even at its most extreme in Quebec, Moore notes that political radicalism in the Deerness Valley was informed by Christian views and the mainstream Liberalism of the area was closely associated with the chapels as personified in the career of John

⁴² Visitation Returns Esh 1892; 1908.

⁴³ Visitation Returns Middleton 1900; Esh 1904.

⁴⁴ Visitation Returns Esh 1908; Waterhouses 1904.

Wilson.⁴⁵ Similar links existed in Teesdale, where the Middleton Wesleyans held an 'At Home' chaired by Arthur Henderson M.P., in January 1911 which attracted 3-400 including 'representative from most of the villages in the district' and whose proceeds were handed to the Progressive Labour Association. In return, Henderson presided at a Sunday evening concert, proceeds of which were for the Teesdale Wesleyan Circuit.⁴⁶ Given the large Liberal majorities in the South Durham constituency and the long term effects of paternalistic employers in both of the areas studied, it is perhaps not surprising that anti-Christian socialism was not perceived as a great threat by the churches of upper Teesdale and the Deerness Valley.

The churches within the community.

Revisionist historians have tended to regard theories of decline and secularisation based on statistical evidence of falling numbers with suspicion; the challenge to such interpretations is to provide some alternative tool by which to measure the impact of religion and of the churches and chapels which delivered the religious message on late Victorian and Edwardian Britain. One response involves an examination of the churches' role in education. The development of state sponsored education after 1870 was certainly a challenge to those churches which provided day education, but did not necessarily mark the end of religious influences in this field. For Cox, indeed, the non-denominational religious education provided in the board schools promoted the 'diffusive Christianity' which meant that:

⁴⁵ Moore R. Pitmen, *Preachers and Politics: The Effects of Methodism in a Durham Mining Community* (Cambridge, 1974) pp.169-182.

⁴⁶ *Mercury* 25/1/11.

the working class were not 'out of touch' with the institutional church in 1900; although they were in a sense 'indifferent to the claims of organised religion', they were not irreligious as a class

For many in the churches, though, this was not enough. Writing from Esh parish in 1904, the Rev. W. Stuart White noticed that:

There is a deep reverence for Holy Scripture among the older people, but the younger race - those educated under the 1870 system - do not seem to care for these things.⁴⁷

Alongside the sense of nostalgia here is a serious point; day education sponsored by the churches was seen as a better means of attracting committed members than the religious education provided in the board schools. The steady growth of the latter was, by some, regarded as a symptom of the churches' decline, regardless of the fact that compulsory state education reached many who had previously been outside the orbit of church schools. Fears about the deleterious impact of state sponsored education thus masked some of its benefits for the churches; it is notable in this respect that the Deerness Valley had no school board during this period - the Rev. Mr. White's observations seem to have been based either on previous experience or on prejudice. A similar pattern is evident in comments about the impact of Sunday schools. The passage of the 1870 Act was seen as a watershed for the schools, now regarded as the 'nurseries' from which new church members would be produced. By 1914 the schools were widely seen as a cause for concern within the churches, prompting the Durham diocese to sponsor a conference to promote improvement in Sunday schools in response to the 'growing belief that they were inefficient and out of date.'⁴⁸ On the one hand this represented a commendable desire to keep abreast of

⁴⁷ Cox J. *The English Churches* p.104; *Visitation Return* Esh 1904.

⁴⁸ Speech by the Rev. Linton Smith reported in *Durham County Advertiser* 23/1/14.

educational developments; on the other it reflected the concern, shared by all the churches, that the schools were not doing their job of recruiting committed church members and worshippers as proven by the growing statistical evidence of decline. Yet to condemn the Sunday schools entirely on the basis of this evidence would be wrong. All the evidence suggests that large numbers attended the schools. Cox argues that 'hardly any-one escaped some form of religious indoctrination in the Sunday schools' and for Green:

attendance at Sunday school was a *norm* of life, more especially of juvenile life and, as the figures make inescapably clear, a norm of working-class juvenile life in the late Victorian manufacturing town⁴⁹

Figures for attendance in South Shields, tentative though they are,⁵⁰ do encourage a rather more pessimistic view of the extent of the schools' impact in the North East; this is confirmed by comments from the Durham Chronicle in 1880, based on the Sunday schools of Halifax, the central town of Green's study:

Probably nowhere in the world do these institutions flourish as they do there. The enormous factories draw together an immense number of young people of both sexes, amongst whom Sunday schools have long been very popular, begetting a warmth of interest and enthusiasm which puts us to shame in Durham and the North.⁵¹

Yet even in the North East many young people, particularly the children of the working classes, clearly attended Sunday school. Even if schools failed to draw large numbers into active church membership, they did instil basic principles of Christian belief amongst a large proportion of the population. And to regard the

⁴⁹ Cox The English Churches p.268; Green Religion in the Age of Decline p.214.

⁵⁰ See above pp.214-215.

⁵¹ Chronicle 28/5/80.

growing chorus of disenchantment with the effects of the Sunday schools in the early twentieth century as a sign of the churches' decline is to risk overlooking the fact that the adults of those years were themselves products of the period generally regarded as the schools' heyday. In so far as they held positions of responsibility and formed public opinion, they did so from a largely Christian viewpoint.

The structures of the church dominated the patterns of daily life in ways which complemented the work of the Sunday schools. The building programmes of all denominations provided physical evidence of the importance of religion. St. Bede's church in South Shields was a visible sign of the aspirations of the town's Roman Catholic population, whilst the significant debt which the building incurred was a sign of their commitment to a building worthy of comparison with other denominations. Opening St. Simon's church in 1880 the Bishop of Durham remarked that the parish's situation, in 'a great railway centre...represented more than anything else the age in which we live'. Its presence was therefore vital:

Just as the hurry and turmoil of life increased, the necessity of religious life increased also...They must bring the principles of devotion as close as they could to the door of the working man.⁵²

Whilst church and chapel buildings might not match public houses in their ubiquity, they were, nevertheless, a sign that the churches' mission was to everyone. The debt consequent upon such extension programmes was a necessary evil rather than a reflection of the vainglory of successive builders. True, church extension could have been carried out in a much more rational manner. Denominations did duplicate provision, not only in South Shields but also in rural

⁵² *Gazette* 21/7/80.

areas like the Deerness Valley, where the Protestant Nonconformists seem to have been especially culpable. But to criticise the churches for this is rather to take them out of their context which was both denominational and competitive and in which organised town planning programmes were a thing of the future. Only the Methodist merger in Harwood points the way to the more rational provision of the post war period. Yet that rationalisation was, in itself, a sign of some 'decline' in the churches' importance. If that process may be seen to have started in the pre-war period, it was by no means so marked as some subsequent studies have suggested.

Church structures comprised more than bricks and mortar. The pattern of life was still, to some extent, punctuated by Christian festivals. Evidence from South Shields is compatible with Green's suggestion of an interdenominational 'religious year' in West Yorkshire. Christmas was not only a time of celebration, it further offered the churches an opportunity for 'outreach' into the community. Many denominations focused their charitable efforts on Christmas with a particular concern to provide for poor children. For the Gospel Temperance Union Christmas provided the opportunity to organise a gathering for 'well known poor and drunken men of the town' and to distribute fruit amongst them.⁵³ Easter tended to be marked more by entertainments than by charitable giving, though again the opportunity for outreach was clear. The Annual Tea and Concert held by St. Hilda's Institute, for example, attracted about 1000 in 1880, at a time when membership of the Institute stood at 200. Advertised in the local press and boasting professional singers and instrumentalists, as well as alcoholic drinks, the Tea and Concert linked commercial leisure activities to a traditional

⁵³ Gazette 3/1/90.

religious festival. Although fewer attended this event later in the period, this was partly, as the parish magazine explained, because many other religious bodies had begun to organise similar events. In part this confirms that these events catered for a clientele not specifically attached to any one religious organisation, but nevertheless within the orbit of the churches: although it should be added that, with 'reserved tickets' for the 1889 event costing 1/6 and 'unreserved' 1/-, this clientele was a relatively wealthy one.⁵⁴ None of this is to suggest that the churches had a monopoly of Easter activities. Railways had made it possible for many to spend this holiday away from South Shields. Whilst this detracted from the churches to a certain extent, it paradoxically helped to promote some of the respectable patterns of behaviour they espoused since, as the Gazette observed in 1890, there were alternatives to the leisure of the public houses so that:

year by year our holiday seasons are less marked by mere
debauchery⁵⁵

Observance of the Whitsuntide holiday was, perhaps, less marked than Easter and Christmas - as early as 1880 the Gazette's columnist 'Wanderin Willie' had remarked on the dearth of Whit. entertainments in the town compared to North Shields, though the annual Band of Hope demonstration was a significant exception, drawing approximately 5,000 children in two separate morning processions and an afternoon of sports and games in 1910.⁵⁶ Later in the Summer, the churches organised their own activities on what was clearly a secular holiday during Race Week. Attention was specifically directed towards

⁵⁴ Gazette 31/3/80; St. Hilda's Parish Magazine April 1888; Programme for 1889 Tea enclosed in Scrapbook 14/4.

⁵⁵ Gazette 5/3/90.

⁵⁶ *ibid.* 14/5/80; 18/5/10.

young people - a number of Sunday school excursions were said to have taken place during the Race Thursday holiday in 1910 - though it should be added that the Gazette reported an 'exodus' from the town on that day, suggesting that adults made use of their leisure time in a variety of ways not necessarily unacceptable to those within the churches such as excursions to the coast or to inland beauty spots. Indeed, the model of a 'secular' culture diametrically opposed to the 'religious' culture of the churches tends to oversimplify a complex issue. In the Deerness Valley, for example, annual 'trips' organised by employers or, indeed, working men's clubs, could easily be presented as rivals to the churches' influence. Yet whilst the rendition of the 'Old Rugged Cross' on 'Woor Geordie's Annual Trip to the Seaside' probably owed as much to the effects of alcohol as to those of the Spirit, it nevertheless indicated just how far religious influences could extend into apparently secular events.⁵⁷ Conversely some within the churches also felt that secular motives could influence apparently religious behaviour, notably in attendance at Harvest Festivals, as the vicar of St. Stephen's explained in 1893 when justifying his decision to ban decorations at the parish's Harvest Festival:

In many towns it is no uncommon thing at this season to hear of people going to one place of worship after another 'to see the decorations'. The 'Harvest Festival' is thus becoming a mere device for drawing a congregation with the ostensible purpose of thanksgiving, but with the ultimate aim of a good collection. In such cases the service is a solemn mockery.⁵⁸

It was in their ability to recognise and respond to this type of mixed culture that the 'associational' churches of the period enjoyed significant success. It is,

⁵⁷ See above p.256.

⁵⁸ St. Stephen's Parish Magazine September 1893.

perhaps, a weakness of their critics to assume that the 'religious' might be entirely distinguished from the 'secular' when in reality the two seem to have overlapped significantly.

In the smaller communities studied, the lack of secular competition and provision of opportunities for leisure meant that the churches played an important part in marking the major festivals of the year for longer, particularly in Teesdale, for the Wesleyans of Waterhouses abandoned Christmas teas much earlier.⁵⁹ Indeed, by 1911 the Chronicle reported that the Esh Wesleyans' at home - featuring Donajavski's famous Bigotphone Band - was 'a great draw...being the only Easter attraction in the district'. Even so, 'fully 700 persons' still attended the three days of the event.⁶⁰ In Teesdale, the slower onset of commercial leisure, coupled with a greater sense of rural isolation meant that Middleton Baptists were able to hold annual Christmas Day anniversary events which were widely patronised by all denominations 'who regard the festival as a town event rather than belonging to one section of the Christian church' and which continued as late as 1911. The antics of that year, reported in the Teesdale Mercury might be taken as a sign of an emerging counter culture: they might better be regarded as a further example of the ways in which secular and religious culture overlapped.

Our correspondent adds that it is to be regretted that the proceedings were marred by the bad behaviour of a few young men who were in the back seat of the chapel, and at the windows outside, and it is to be hoped that they will take this as a timely warning that should there be a similar occurrence in future police court proceedings will have to be taken.⁶¹

⁵⁹ See above p.256.

⁶⁰ Chronicle 3/3/11

⁶¹ Mercury 3/1/00; 27/12/11.

A final measure of the churches' importance during this period lies in their status as institutions. In South Shields, for example, they continued to play an important part in both national and local affairs. The Jubilee celebrations of 1897 involved significant 'secular' activities - bands played in the municipal parks, swimming clubs organised special breakfasts and a 7 a.m. parade, bonfires were held on the Beacon and Ballast Hills and electric and gas illuminations were lit throughout the town - but the churches continued to play an important role in the celebrations, with special services and, most notably, a procession of nearly 12,000 children from 38 schools. In a demonstration of the churches' links with national sentiment, they sang the national anthem and 'Victoria Regina', from 'Great Thoughts', itself composed by the S.S.U.'s musical director in South Shields and the winner of a competition which had attracted over 300 entries.⁶² Simultaneously, a second procession of about 2,000 poor children, headed by the Workhouse band, had processed to the Market Place. 'Evidence was not wanting' wrote the Gazette

that the very poorest families in the borough had been reached, indeed, a large number of them being hatless and shoeless⁶³

Clearly, the Sunday schools had not reached all the children of the town. Nevertheless, having arrived at the square, the poor children were addressed not only by the Deputy Mayor but also by the Rev. J. Leathley, superintendent of the Chapter Row Wesleyan Methodist circuit. Even those not actively involved in the churches were thus exposed to religious messages. Further, the Deputy Mayor

⁶² Gazette (n.d.) cutting in Scrapbook 14/6.

⁶³ *ibid.*

himself - Robert Readhead of the shipbuilding family - was a staunch churchman who provided money for several of the Anglican churches in the town throughout this period. When he entered into his third mayoralty in 1910 the Gazette wrote of his association with 'practically all...benevolent, useful and athletic institutions' in the borough: five years earlier he had given £50 towards the building of new church rooms in St. Mark's parish.⁶⁴ Similar examples of the link between public service and support for church activities abound throughout the period. J.C. Stevenson was M.P. for the borough for 27 years. He also served on the Burial Board, as a J.P., and as leader of the 'Forward Party' on the Town Council before his appointment as mayor in 1867. His voluntary work encompassed mechanics' institutes and working men's clubs as well as founding the Town and River Mission of which, along with the Sunday School Union, he was the long term president. His commitment to the Laygate Presbyterian Church is evident from his personal financial contribution to its building,⁶⁵ yet he was clearly ecumenical in his patronage of church activities, his generosity making possible St. Stephen's Anglican Sunday school treat of 1875.⁶⁶ Stevenson's successor as M.P., W.S. Robson, also chaired chapel meetings and his wife opened a flower festival, designed to raise money for Holy Trinity parish, in 1895. Here she followed Alderman J.C. Eltringham, the owner of the Stone Quay boiler and small craft works, who had personally given £325 to the appeal for the parish of which he was vicar's warden.⁶⁷ Of course, some of this largesse might be seen as political

⁶⁴ Gazette 9/11/10; 30/11/05.

⁶⁵ See above p.90.

⁶⁶ Gazette 2/9/75.

⁶⁷ Gazette 28/11/95.

manoeuvring.⁶⁸ Yet the fact remains that local politicians regarded the churches as sufficiently important to be worthy of courting. The involvement of religious organisations in moments of national mourning is, perhaps, not surprising: they were, after all, concerned directly with the hereafter and so well placed to serve as the national conscience. The death of Queen Victoria was marked by services throughout the town and a gathering - estimated at 20,000 by the local press - in the Market Place. The Free churches held their own special services, as did the Salvation Army, the Gospel Temperance Union and the Jewish synagogue. On the following day the Board School children of the town heard addresses on the queen's life delivered not only by their headteachers but also by the clergymen and ministers of the town.⁶⁹ For Wolffe this event marked a possible end of 'Victorian Values' in that Victoria was seen to have embodied general religious principles in her life, even though her own religious beliefs were eclectic. Wolffe again highlights the complexity of popular religion in his suggestion that responses to her death pushed the limits of Christian orthodoxy to their extremes, intertwining as they did the Queen's role as mother to her family, her moral rectitude and her image as mother to the nation with her own religious views.⁷⁰ Yet the death of her son nine years later, whilst it might not have captured the popular imagination in the way that the queen's death had, nevertheless showed the continuing part played in civic life by the churches. Special services of mourning were again held throughout the borough. As in 1901 the main service was at St. Hilda's, where a procession of civic officials from the posse of police

⁶⁸ See above p.90.

⁶⁹ Press clippings (unattributed) 2/2/01 enclosed in Scrapbook 14/7.

⁷⁰ Wolffe J. *The End of Victorian Values ? Women, Religion and the Death of Queen Victoria* in Women in The Church Studies in Church History no. 27 (1990) pp.481-503.

and firemen to the Mayor and J.P.s, accompanied by the town's freemasons and representatives of public bodies such as the ambulance organisations paraded to hear the Rev. Canon Bilborough preach. 'Thousands' again attended an overflow service in the Market Place.⁷¹ No doubt many attended from a sense of civic duty, and no doubt many within the churches felt that such apparent 'support' was in no way a measure of the success of their real work of saving souls. Nevertheless, the death of the king illustrated again the extent to which the churches continued to play a central role in public life.

The involvement of paternalistic patrons in church life in both the Deerness Valley and upper Teesdale reflects something of the perceived importance of religious organisations in each area whilst the fact that the major patrons in each area were themselves committed Christians further emphasises the importance of religion in the communities. The £50 which the London Lead Company donated to the building of Middleton's new Wesleyan chapel in 1870 was evidence of its commitment to the religious cause. Other local notables made significant donations - including £10 from Mr. J.C. Monkhouse and £5 from Mr. R.W. Bainbridge, this despite his supposed partiality towards his own Baptist church. Equally significant was the financial support of the Pease family - amounting to £50 in total.⁷² None of this is to contradict Green's argument that few churches were able to survive purely on the basis of private patronage⁷³; it does, however, show that men of means were willing to offer their support to the churches, though it should be added that, when the same church built its new Sunday

⁷¹ Gazette 20/5/10.

⁷² Middleton on Teesdale Wesleyan Methodist Chapel Building Accounts 1869-1872.

⁷³ Green Religion in the Age of Decline pp.142-152.

school in 1905 the list of subscribers had a much more local flavour, with the main contribution coming from Mr. R.W. Raine, the town's chemist and leading Wesleyan.⁷⁴ Clearly the departure of the Company from the dale had its effects on the local churches. Yet even without such patronage, the churches continued to play a central role in community life. Moore has clearly illustrated the role played by Methodist 'patriarchs' in the Deerness Valley, their power mirroring that of the paternalist coal owners on a more limited stage.⁷⁵ Lay leaders in the free churches enjoyed 'a wide opening for self assertion' according to local Anglicans who also observed 'the feeling of restraint' being 'thrown off' in the Methodist societies, where lay people had the opportunity for public speaking and secretarial work and where the membership enjoyed 'the feeling of social equality and comradeship [sic].'⁷⁶ Of course, such men had their critics. The Chronicle's 'local notes' in 1890 reported complaints that:

The same men (with the exception of local preachers) have the exclusive management of local chapels and quarter boards. They receive no mandate from the membership, and the members are only rarely called together or taken into confidence.

When William Foster cited the four church offices he held as evidence of his moral probity during the Deerness Valley Club Controversy, he was rebuked by an anonymous correspondent, who asked him:

Why did he not resign some of his minor offices ? There are plenty of unemployed in the Church as well as in the industrial world,

⁷⁴ Middleton on Teesdale Wesleyan Methodist Sunday School Building Accounts 1899-1908.

⁷⁵ Moore Pitmen, Preachers and Politics p.73 and Appendix IV.

⁷⁶ Visitation Returns Waterhouses and Esh 1900.

and there was no necessity for him to hold four or five positions.⁷⁷

Yet whilst such comments might well help to explain the growing disenchantment which several commentators have recorded amongst younger Nonconformists, concerned at their inability to break into an apparently self-perpetuating oligarchy at the head of the chapels, they do not obscure the fact that men associated with the churches and chapels continued to hold important positions in local society. Moore's work clearly illustrated the leading part played by Primitive Methodists in both trade union and Liberal politics,⁷⁸ but other denominations were not without influence. John Raw, for example, coupled a leading role in the Waterhouses Baptist church with his position as village stationmaster and donated one of the houses he had built in Durham Rd. in 1878 to the congregation to use as a chapel, with the result that his fellow Baptists had to find only £100 towards the total cost of their place of worship.⁷⁹ The Baptists also provide evidence of how the church communities could elicit great public support on particular occasions. The funeral of Miss Nellie Bee in 1904, was deemed worthy of note as the 72 year old was an active member of the Baptist Church and of the Christian Endeavour movement. Her cortege was headed by members of the Baptist C.E. Society, followed by Sunday scholars and their teachers:

considerably over 1000 people followed in the procession, and a more impressive funeral has not been witnessed in the village for many years.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Chronicle 4/4/90; 30/12/04; 6/1/05. For details of club controversy, see above p.250.

⁷⁸ Moore Pitmen, Preachers and Politics pp.158-168.

⁷⁹ Clark K. Deerness: A Short Industrial and Social History (Durham, 1987) p.95.

⁸⁰ Chronicle 18/11/04.

On such occasions, the churches were at the forefront of community life in the villages. In Upper Teesdale the opening of the Middleton Wesleyan chapel drew 'crowded congregations' of 1871.⁸¹ The annual Wesleyan Circuit Demonstration and the Primitive Methodist Sunday school anniversary remained important annual events in the town.⁸² Conversely, as in South Shields, the churches were represented at important events in the communities' history. The young people of Middleton attended a church service amidst the secular activities to celebrate the relief of Mafeking in 1900 and a united church service involving Anglican, Baptist and Wesleyan ministers was held on coronation day in 1911.⁸³ Even those activities which were not directly organised by the churches were not bereft of religious influences. Thus the Middleton Male Voice Choir had an Anglican chairman and a Wesleyan Vice President in 1905; in 1911 the Mechanics' Institute President William Oddie, Headmaster of the town's school and a leading Anglican who had also been its long term treasurer; the Wesleyan watchmaker Mr. William Noquet was a speaker at the annual Rechabite dinner in 1895; Mr. Alexander Hope - an Anglican - was in the chair for the St. John's Ambulance Association's annual dinner in Middleton in 1895 and the Rev. A.H. Ford was even to be found amongst a predictably nonconformist group as a member of the Co-operative committee in 1905.⁸⁴ The major agricultural shows also enjoyed clerical patronage - the Rev. Mr. Milner was president of the Middleton Flower

⁸¹ Mercury 16/8/71.

⁸² TWC Demonstration Committee Minutes 3/6/10.

⁸³ Mercury 30/5/00; 28/6/11.

⁸⁴ Mercury 27/9/05 - the President was Mr. W. Oddie, the Vice President Mr. R.W. Raine; 1/11/11; 20/2/95; 27/3/95; 20/12/05.

and Horticultural Society in 1890 and the Rev. Mr. Johnson was a principal speaker at the Eggleston show of 1905.⁸⁵ Indeed, when the churches were not represented at a major public meeting it was a matter of note. The speaker at the Druids' annual dinner, held at Middleton in 1886, regretted the fact that 'none of the clergy were present at the Druids' anniversary.'⁸⁶ In short, the churches were interwoven into community life in ways which are impossible to segregate. Whether William Oddie enjoyed influence a schoolmaster first and an Anglican second or vice versa is not especially relevant. The fact is that he represented the Anglican church in significant areas of community life. Mr. John Wall of Eggleston died, aged 74, in 1900. The Mercury recorded his 33 years in the butchery and hotel business alongside his work as church warden and school manager and his contribution both to the village's reading room and its brass band.⁸⁷ The role played by R.W. Bainbridge in supporting the Baptist church in Middleton has been discussed above; no less significant was the support given by Mr. J.C. Monkhouse, one time estate agent at Eggleston, to the Wesleyans of the upper dale. Resident in Barnard Castle he had been a member of the Board of Health, and clerk to the commissioners of the Eggleston Turnpike Trust as well as treasurer of the Teesdale Poor Law Union and the first agent for the Backhouse bank in Middleton. Further, he had made a name for himself as a local preacher and class leader:

a staunch and leading member of the Wesleyan church...his enthusiasm in the cause of village Methodism was great.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Mercury 27/8/90; 20/9/05.

⁸⁶ *ibid.* 29/12/86.

⁸⁷ *ibid.* 20/6/00

⁸⁸ *ibid.* 3/12/90.

The work and witness of men such as these meant that religion continued to play an important - if, perhaps, declining - part in life in upper Teesdale throughout this period. Any suggestion that religion was 'in decline' which is based purely on statistical evidence should be reviewed in the light of this continuing cultural importance.

APPENDIX A : POPULATION FIGURES

i) The Borough of South Shields

Census Date	Population of borough	Intercensal % growth	Births per 1000 pop.	Deaths per 1000 pop.	% of pop. born outside Co. Durham		% pop. under 30 years	% of all Co. Durham pop. under 30.
					Male	Female		
1871	45,336	-	-	-	34.7	30.01	64.79	66.35
1881	56,875	25.45	39.8	18.6	-	-	-	-
1891	78,391	37.83	39.9	22.8	34.03	28.72	66.03	66.04
1901	97,263	24.07	36.4	19.4	-	-	-	-
1911	104,228	7.16	30.3	17.4	23.6	21.98	63.34	62.52

Source: Parliamentary Papers Census Returns 1871 - 1911; Borough of South Shields Medical Officer of Health Reports 1885 - 1911.

APPENDIX A : POPULATION FIGURES

(ii) The Deerness Valley.

Population figures for the settlements of the valley are difficult to establish. This appendix includes both the census data and Moore's estimate of the size of the population in the main villages of the valley, extrapolated from the size of the work force at the collieries.

	1871 Population	1891 Population	1911 Population
Esh	(Township) 2,294	(Civil Parish) 6,392	(Civil Parish) 10,175
Cornsay	(Township) 1,432	(Civil Parish) 2,275	(Civil Parish) 2,069
Hedleyhope	(Township) 381	(Civil Parish) 1,418	No Return
Waterhouses	No Return	(Civil Parish) 1,046	Part of Brandon and Byshottles District

Source: Parliamentary Papers Census Returns 1871, 1891 and 1911.

	1895 Population	1901 Population	1911 Population
Esh Winning	2,090	2,400	3,100
Waterhouses	1,520	1,900	1,800
Cornsay Colliery		2,100	2,200
Hamsteels		2,700	2,600

Source: Moore R. Pitmen, Preachers and Politics: The Effects of Methodism in a Durham Mining Village (Cambridge, 1974) p.68.

APPENDIX A : POPULATION FIGURES

(iii) The Upper Teesdale Townships.

	1871 Population	1911 Population	Women as % total population		Intercensal % fall in population
			1871	1911	
Eggleston	756	461	52.9	54	39
Forest	792	537	45.6	46	32
Middleton	2386	1863	48	52.5	22
Newbiggen	645	316	47	48.4	51

Source: Parliamentary Papers Census Returns 1871 and 1911.

Appendix B: Maps.

Appendix B (i): South Shields in 1870.

Extract from the plan of North and South Shields and Tynemouth from ordnance and actual surveys, printed and published by John Christie (Newcastle) 1873. Scale 8 inches to the mile.

Appendix B (ii): South Shields in 1913 showing places of worship mentioned in the text.

Extracts from the Ordnance Survey 1921 edition (revised 1912-13 and partly in 1920). Durham sheets III NE and SE and sheets IV NW and SW. Scale 6 inches to the mile.

Appendix B (iii): The Deerness Valley in 1915.

Extracts from the Ordnance Survey 1923 edition (revised 1915). Durham sheet XXVI NE and NW. Scale 6 inches to the mile.

Appendix B (iv): Upper Teesdale in 1937.

Extracts from the Ordnance Survey 1937 edition Durham sheets 10 and 13 and Sheet 14 (a 1941 War Office reprint of the 1937 original with military grid lines added). Scale 1 inch to the mile.

Appendix C: A List of the Churches and Chapels of the Main Denominations in South Shields (details are not complete).

Anglican Churches.

St. Hilda's.

Origins.

Chapelry of Jarrow parish until 1845, then first South Shields Parish.

Main buildings and renovations/rebuildings.

1810-12	rebuilding of church in 'Italianate' style with 1520 sittings (£6,860).
1865-6	organ installation and pew resiting (£800).
1871	removal of box pews, choir stalls moved to east end (£1,200). capacity increased to 1800 - all free sittings by 1882.
1878-9	roof and window renovations; heating installation (£2,600).
1886	purchase of church clock and augmentation of bells to eight.
1896	opening of 'Song Room' in church - choir vestry and parish room (£294).
1899-1901	gallery reseating, redecoration and side screens for choir. Installation of electric lighting (£1,151).
1905	installation of new organ (£500).

Ancillary buildings.

1867	Oyston St. Infants' School.
1870	St. Hilda's Boys' and Girls' Elementary Schools (later mixed).
1870s	Barrington St. Mission Room.
1905	Ogle Terrace Mission Room.
1876	St. Hilda's Institute (Waterloo Vale).
1905	West St. Boys' Club.
1895	Cornwallis St. caretaker's house.
1899	Waterloo Vale caretaker's house.

Holy Trinity.

Origins.

Established by initiative of Dean and Chapter against wishes of St. Hilda's parish (1833 - 34). Separate parish 1848.

Main buildings and renovations/rebuildings.

- | | |
|--------|--|
| 1839 | Salvin church in Early English style. Cost £3,700. Financed by Dean and Chapter (£2,100) and Incorporated Church Building Society (£500).
1,200 sittings. |
| 1875 | Reseating, redecoration and heating (£600). |
| 1878-9 | Restoration of church buildings. Addition of chancel, North and South transepts, organ chamber and choir vestry (£3,200). |
| 1886 | Internal renovations - repanelling and brass lectern (£1,000).
1000 sittings. |
| 1895 | Redecoration and installation of organ (£625). |
| 1904 | Installation of electric light. |

Ancillary buildings.

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 1836 | Day schools built (£516). |
| 1876 | Infant schools built. |
| 1887 | Girls' school built - boys in old school. |
| 1891 | Expansion and renovation of girls' school. |
| 1881 | Windmill Hill Mission Room rented by parish. Seated 200. |
| 1880s | Opening of parish room - accommodation for 100. |
| 1893 | Nelson Bank Mission Room. |
| 1903 | Iron Building (Trinity Court) replaced rented premises for young men's institute. |

St. Stephen's.Origins.

Established in response to Town Hall meeting of 1838 which requested church in east end of town for poor. Separate parish 1846.

Main buildings and renovations/rebuildings.

- | | |
|--------|---|
| 1844-6 | Salvin church in Early English style. 610 sittings.(£1,600 of which £1000 was provided by Dean and Chapter, rest by voluntary contribution). |
| 1896 | Silver jubilee renovations of church - replacement of floor joists, seating in nave and for choir, pulpit, altar rail and gas fittings, repairs to roof and flashings (approx. £700). |
| 1899 | Installation of electric lighting. |
| 1905 | Installation of new organ (£650). |

Ancillary buildings.

- | | |
|--------|---|
| 1852-3 | St. Stephen's National Day Schools. Accommodation for 400 pupils at first, 700 by 1880. Leased by South Shields School Board from 1880 onwards. |
| 1874 | Wapping St. Mission Room. |
| 1890 | Purchase of land for Hedley St. Parish Hall and Institute. |

St. Mary's.Origins.

1860 mission of Holy Trinity in response to growing population of Tyne Dock area as docks and chemical works expanded. Separate parish 1864.

Main buildings and renovations/rebuildings.

- | | |
|--------|---|
| 1860 | Temporary church in Jarrow Chemical Company Schools. |
| 1861-2 | Permanent church in Gothic style. 646 sittings. Mainly financed by Dean and Chapter sale of land to railway company, though Alderman Williamson donated £862 to total cost of £4,800. Greater portion of site provided by Ecclesiastical Commissioners. |
| 1882 | Choir moved from gallery to East end of church. |
| 1905 | Plan for new organ (£700 - half cost met by Carnegie). |

Ancillary buildings.

- | | |
|------|--|
| 1866 | St. Mary's National and Infant Schools. Accommodation for 490 pupils. Leased by South Shields School Board early 1880s. Voluntary control re-established 1896. |
| 1885 | Mission house. |
| 1894 | Mission moved to Corstophine Town. Accommodation for 160. |
| 1905 | Second mission in Deans. Accommodation for 50. |

St. Mark's.Origins.

Cambridge St. Mission of Holy Trinity 1868. Iron church cost £500 in 1870.
Separate parish 1873.

Main buildings and renovations/rebuildings.

- | | |
|--------|---|
| 1873-5 | Building of Decorated style church and vestry (£4,200).
£1,000 grant from Ecclesiastical Commissioners.
500 sittings. |
| 1876 | Building of vicarage. |
| 1881 | Installation of new organ. |
| 1897 | Repairs to church building. Reglazing, complete interior renovation and improvements to roof (£750). |

Ancillary Buildings.

- | | |
|------|--|
| 1870 | Opening of Mixed School - transferred to iron church after 1875. |
| 1872 | Opening of Infant School.
Total school accommodation for 600. |
| 1898 | Wilson St. Mission. Accommodation for 50. |

St. Thomas'.Origins.

Fowler St. Chapel of Ease of St. Hilda's 1817. Church buildings to sit 700 consecrated 1819 (cost £2,600 including schools) but no parish attached until separate parish status in 1864.

Main buildings and renovations/rebuildings.

- | | |
|--------|---|
| 1875-7 | Church in Decorated style to replace 'ugly' brick building (approx. £8,000 of which £2,600 was donated by Alderman Williamson. £1,250 granted by Ecclesiastical Commissioners. 1000 sittings - reduced to 600 after 1890. |
| 1910 | New organ fund. |

Ancillary buildings.

- | | |
|------|--|
| 1886 | Mission room - sat 50. |
| 1889 | St. Thomas Hall, Denmark St. Used for Sunday schools, for parish societies and for hire and use by other parishes and organisations. |

St. Simon's.Origins.

Mission of St. Mary's to meet needs of growing population in Simonside due to N.E.R. development of that area. Separate parish 1875.

Main buildings and renovations/rebuildings.

- | | |
|------|--|
| 1880 | Stone building in late Gothic style. Ecclesiastical Commissioners raised £2,000 of total £3,500 costs by sale of land to railway company - remainder raised by subscription. 300 sittings. |
| 1886 | Parsonage built (£1,600). |
| 1892 | Installation of new organ and of tubular bells. |

Ancillary buildings.

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| 1878-1883 | St. Simon's National schools. Accommodation for 140. |
| 1892 | Opening of new Sunday schools and church institute. |

St. Michael's.Origins.

1874 meeting at Infirmary called for church in Westoe. Somerset St. mission from St. Hilda moved to Derby Terrace. Separate parish 1878.

Main buildings and renovations/rebuildings.

- 1882 Opening of church 'in style of a college hall'. Stained glass (including Alderman Brougham memorial) and organ - gift of Alderman Williamson. (£3,460 - £1,000 grant and two acres of land from Ecclesiastical Commissioners; £250 grant from Incorporated Church Building Society).
426 sittings.
- 1886 New organ and chamber (£600) and parsonage (£1,520).
- 1895 Expansion of church by adding of two aisles - increased capacity by 300 - and renovation including installation of open pews. (£2,200).
- 1900 Addition of two vestry rooms for general use for parish organisations etc. (£800). Further £140 spent on organ and £100 on electric light.
- 1910 Opening of St. Margaret's chapel at east end of church. Used for weekday services. 42 sittings.

Ancillary buildings.

- 1880 Two mission rooms.
- 1901 St. Andrew's Mission, Derby Terrace.
- 1910 Church Hall and Sunday school (£3,393).

St. Jude's.Origins.

Mission of Holy Trinity. Created as a district 1883, separate parish 1886 on erection of church.

Main buildings and renovations/rebuildings.

1886 Opening of church (£3,219 - £1,000 grant and whole of site provided by Ecclesiastical Commissioners).
617 sittings.

Ancillary buildings.

1897 Eldon St. mission with accommodation for 100.
1901 Opening of second mission room with accommodation for 200.

1885 Opening of mission hall in Alice St. Used for church services then as parish hall and Sunday school after building of church. Buildings cost £100, land £1,400. Debt on hall not cleared by 1910.

St. Aidan's.Origins.

Created from St. Stephen's parish to service needs of new residential area of town. Separate parish 1885.

Main buildings and renovations/rebuildings.

1888 Opening of church to plans of J.H. Morton to replace mission in Ocean Rd. skating rink. Parish room and Sunday school built in basement of church. (£4,710 - £500 grant and £250 towards purchase of land from Ecclesiastical Commissioners).
612 sittings.

1910 Cleaning, redecoration and organ overhaul and expansion.

Ancillary buildings.

1913 Mission Room. Accommodation for 60.

1902 Opening of Memorial Hall - used for Sunday school, institute and general parish activities.

St. Oswin's.Origins.

St. Michael's 1898 mission in Oxford St. to meet needs of expanding Stanhope Rd. area of town. Separate parish 1902.

Main buildings and renovations / rebuildings.

- | | |
|------|---|
| 1904 | Corrugated iron room replaced class room in Board School as centre of parish work. Accommodation for 200. (£500). |
| 1910 | Consecration of parish church. First phase of planned three phase building - three bays of brick built nave with stone dressing (£3,400). 320 sittings.
Planned later building of rest of nave, choir and clergy vestries. |

Ancillary buildings.

- | | |
|------|--------------------------------------|
| 1913 | Mission room. Accommodation for 130. |
|------|--------------------------------------|

St. Francis'.

Formed from St. Mary's and St. Jude's parishes in 1910. Church accommodation for 160.

Missions to Seamen Church.**Origins.**

Anglican mission to seamen in North and South Shields established 1857.
Purchased hulk of H.M.S. Diamond as floating mission for £1000 in 1866.
Separation of north and South Shields missions 1882-3.

Main buildings and renovations/rebuildings.

1885	Dedication of new mission buildings in Mill Dam. Church, reading and writing rooms (£3,655).
1895	Renovation of church and institute, including new floor.
1898	Expansion of buildings to include classrooms for ambulance work etc. (£1000).
1910	Plan for £600 extension of buildings.

Roman Catholic Churches.**St. Bede's.****Origins.**

Separate mission from St. Cuthbert's, North Shields in 1849 following a petition from the Catholics of South Shields to the Bishop. Based in the former Bristol Brethren chapel in Cuthbert St.

Main buildings and renovations/rebuildings.

- | | |
|------|--|
| 1876 | Opening of St. Bede's, Westoe Lane. Chancel, nave and two aisles. Two side chapels and two sacristies. Stained glass gift of Mr. J. Grunhut. (£11,000).
800 sittings. |
| 1884 | Opening of Presbytery. |
| 1895 | Renovations to Lady Chapel and erection of organ. |
| 1910 | Wood block floor laid. |

Ancillary buildings.

- | | |
|------|--|
| 1867 | Victoria Rd. day schools. |
| 1889 | Enlargement of and alterations to schools. |
| 1913 | Opening of Derby St. schools (£6,291). |
| 1911 | Opening of Cambridge St. institute. |

S.S. Peter and Paul.**Origins.**

Created as a separate mission to populous Tyne Dock area in 1884.

Main buildings and renovations/rebuildings.

- | | |
|------|---|
| 1889 | Building of mission school chapel. Accommodation for 400 children or 200 worshippers. By 1905 capable of sitting 5-600. |
| 1905 | Foundation stone of new church to be built in Romanesque style. 600 sittings. |

St. John's Presbyterian Church.Origins.

Saville St. secession from Mile End Rd. chapel 1834. Reunited 1842 as St. John's.

Main buildings and renovations/rebuildings.

1876 Building of new church opposite Wellington Terrace to replace Saville St. building. Site £500, total costs £5,000. 630 sittings.

Ancillary buildings.

1886 Higher grade school opened next to church to replace older school in Winchester St.

1869 Mill St. Mission - plan for permanent building 1875.

Laygate Presbyterian Church.Origins.

Founded with help from James Stevenson (Jarrow Chemical Co.) in 1849.

Main buildings and renovations / rebuildings.

1849 Opening of church which sat 530 - no major changes until 1910 plan for rebuilding church buildings deemed unsuitable for Christian worship

Ancillary buildings.

1890 Brunswick St. mission.

1902 Tyne Dock offshoot - St. Andrew's Church by 1905.

1879 Archibald Stevenson Memorial Hall (£1,500).

St. Paul's Presbyterian Church.Origins.

1820s union of Anti Burgher and Burgher church in former Baptist and Wesleyan church in Society Lane.

Main buildings and renovations/rebuildings.

1880 Opening of new brick church in Early English style on Westoe Lane with turret and internal gallery. North transept only at first, with option of southern addition late. (£2,600).
500 sittings.

Ancillary buildings.

1880 Opening of Sunday school room to sit 150.
1890 Opening of new school room.

1885 Pan Bank mission.

Mile End Rd. Presbyterian Church.Origins.

Founded after 1778 secession, then based in Heugh St. chapel. Moved to Mile End Rd. 1858.

Main buildings and renovations/rebuildings.

1858 Church built.
500 sittings.
1880 14 day renovation of buildings, including north end window in memory of J.H. Rennoldson's parents.
1900 installation of electric lighting.

Ancillary buildings.

1874 Sunday school and lecture hall.
1900 New Presbyterian Hall and Sunday schools, Ingham St.

Westoe Lane Baptist Church.

Origins.

1818 origins in town. Barrington St. chapel of 1821 replaced by Westoe Lane 1881.

Main buildings and renovations/rebuildings.

- | | |
|------|--|
| 1876 | Purchase of Westoe Lane site for £500. |
| 1881 | Opening of 'Italianate' style chapel. Brick with stone dressing facade with three doors, internal galleries, raised baptistry and hot water central heating system. (£2,600).
750 sittings. |
| 1903 | Electric lighting. |
| 1904 | Installation of new organ (built by a member of the congregation) and new pulpit. |
| 1905 | Extension of central heating system to galleries. Two months cleaning and redecoration. |
| 1906 | Installation of electric blower for organ. |

Ancillary buildings.

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| 1888 | Opening of Percy St. mission station. |
| 1900 | Closure of long established Andersons Lane Mission (rented premises no longer available). |
| 1882
class | Opening of west end building for Sunday school and classes - five rooms. |

Mile End Rd. Particular Baptist Chapel.

Secession from Barrington St. in 1833. Chapel of 1880, but extinct by 1903.

Emmanuel Baptist Free Church, Imeary Lane.

Origins.

1892 secession from Westoe Lane Church following clashes between the pastor (Mr. Mason) and the deacons. Mason led a new congregation, first in the Ocean Rd. skating rink, then in a new chapel in Imeary St.

Main buildings and renovations/rebuildings.

1895 Opening of new chapel. Brick and stone Gothic building with pitch pine sittings. 66 yards of land cost £120, total estimated cost £1,400.
500 sittings.

Ancillary buildings.

1895 Opening of lecture hall and two classrooms adjoining church.
Accommodation for 400.

Baptist Tabernacle, Laygate Lane.

Origins.

Began 1840 in Bristol Brethren chapel, to Cuthbert St. 1848, to Cambridge St. 1855, to Johnson's Hill 1867, to Laygate Lane 1870.

Main buildings and renovations/rebuildings.

1870 Opening of brick built chapel in Italianate style (£2,000).
800 sittings.
1875 Renovations and cleaning.
1910 Fund for heating system.

Ancillary buildings.

1874 Opening of Sunday school (accommodation for 280) and lecture hall.

Ocean Rd. Congregationalist Church.

Origins.

Formal congregation in Academy Hill chapel, 1822. Moved to Wallis St.. chapel 1824.

Main buildings and renovations/rebuildings.

1884 Opening of Ocean Rd. church (£5,090).
630 sittings.

Ancillary buildings.

1893 Opening of Sunday school and church hall building next to church
in Gothic Revival style. Ground floor hall 40" x 54"; eight first floor
classrooms and infant school room (£7,000).

Tyne Dock Congregationalist Church, Boldon Lane.

Origins.

Mission of Wallis St. 1871.

Main buildings and renovations / rebuildings.

1879 Opening of chapel at cost of £1,042.
320 sittings.

Ancillary Buildings.

1879 School room beneath chapel.
1885 Purchase of Manse.

Chapter Row Wesleyan Chapel.Origins.

Westoe Methodist Society of 1746. Meetings in Thrift St. and East St. Chapter Row chapel built 1808 at cost of £3,000. 1700 sittings.

Main buildings and renovations / rebuildings.

1865	Internal restoration.
1890	Extensive renovation of chapel, estimated cost £900.

Ancillary buildings.

?	Chapter Row Sunday schools.
---	-----------------------------

Baring St. Wesleyan Chapel.Origins.

1844 purchase of iron church in Wellington St. from Presbyterians. Moved to Baring St. in new Shields Heugh Estate in 1884.

Main buildings and renovations / rebuildings.

1884	Opening of chapel (£1,310). 300 sittings.
?	New chapel built next to schools.

Ancillary Buildings.

1892	Opening of Sunday schools.
------	----------------------------

Frederick St. Wesleyan Chapel.Origins.

Opened 1881.

Main buildings and renovations/rebuildings.

1881	Opening of chapel and two school rooms (£4,750). 700 sittings.
------	---

Westoe Wesleyan Chapel.

Origins.

Temporary church built 1905 to compete with other denominations' expansion into Westoe.

Main buildings and renovations/rebuildings.

1905	Opening of corrugated iron temporary church. Pitched pine internal fittings and electric light (£600). 300 sittings. Laying of foundation stone for permanent church with Sunday schools, classrooms and vestries.
------	--

Other Wesleyan Chapels.

During this period there were also Wesleyan chapels at **Templetown** (1826) and **Johnson's Hill** (1863). Neither was a part of the South Shields Circuit in 1903.

New Glebe Primitive Methodist Chapel.

Origins.

Glebe P.M. chapel built in Cornwallis St. 1823 cost £1,600. 900 sittings. Rebuilt 1866 for 650 sittings with school room and vestries. Further renovations 1883. Removed to Westoe Lane 1890.

Main buildings and renovations/rebuildings.

- | | |
|------|---|
| 1890 | Opening of New Glebe chapel in early Gothic style with western transept all in brick and green slate. Ventilation system, organ and choir, pine fittings. School buildings - total cost £4,790. 650 sittings. |
| 1895 | Renovations of church (£200). |
| 1910 | Plan for new organ (to replace instrument which had served Cornwallis St. chapel too). Carnegie support for cost. |

Ancillary buildings.

- | | |
|------|---|
| 1880 | Alma St. P.M. mission. |
| 1889 | Sunday school including class rooms and assembly hall. Accommodation for 600. |

Laygate Lane, Primitive Methodist Chapel.

Origins.

Second Primitive Methodist society opened in Templetown 1823. Removed to Smith St. chapel 140. New chapel built in Corstophine Town 1860, cost £1,237. 600 sittings. Removed to Laygate chapel 1881.

Main buildings and renovations/rebuildings.

- | | |
|------|---|
| 1881 | Opening of new chapel (£5,400). 700 sittings. |
|------|---|

Ancillary buildings.

- | | |
|------|-------------------------|
| 1883 | Mission |
| ? | Bowman St. school room. |

Tyne Dock Primitive Methodist Chapel.

Origins.

1863 formation of society at Tyne Dock.

Main buildings and renovations/rebuildings.

1869	Opening of chapel (£1,065).
1905	Opening of new organ.
1910	Plan for new chapel. Site cost £600, total cost of site and buildings (including Sunday school) estimated at £4,000.

Ancillary buildings.

1869	Sunday school under chapel.
------	-----------------------------

Baring St. Primitive Methodist Chapel.

Origins.

Developed from Alma St. Glebe Mission to serve developing Shields Heugh estate 1883.

Main buildings and renovations/rebuildings.

1883	Iron church.
1903	Opening of new chapel to replace iron church. Attached school and endeavour homes (£4,800). 300 sittings.

Heugh St. Primitive Methodist Chapel.

Origins.

Purchase of former Presbyterian chapel by Primitive Methodists in 1858.

Main buildings and renovations/rebuildings.

1873	Rebuilding of chapel.
1890	Redecoration of chapel.

Chapel closed 1898 in light of financial difficulties.

Other Primitive Methodist Chapels.

A school chapel was built on **Talbot Rd.** following the closure of the Harton P.M. society at a cost of £1,400 in 1898.

A Primitive Methodist chapel was built on **Wenlock Rd.** to serve the Simonside area in 1901.

Zion (Laygate Lane) Methodist New Connexion Chapel.Origins.

1814 mission to South Shields from North Shields. Johnson's Hill chapel. 1859 Laygate Lane chapel.

Main buildings and renovations/rebuildings.

1859 Opening of Zion chapel (£4,000).
700 sittings.

Ancillary buildings.

1866 Wapping St. Mission.
? George Potts St. Mission.

? Palmerston St. Sunday schools.

Heron St. Methodist New Connexion Chapel.Origins.

Zion mission in Wapping St. developed as Heron St. Congregation.

Main buildings and renovations/rebuildings.

1873 Opening of Chapel and school room (£300).
Accommodation for 300.

Deans Methodist New Connexion Chapel.

Founded 1880.

Queen St. United Methodist Free Church Chapel.Origins.

Wesleyan Methodist Association 1834 Queen St. chapel, enlarged 1850. Union with Wesleyan Reformers 1855.

Main buildings and renovations/rebuildings.

1863	Rebuilding of Queen St. chapel. 800 sittings.
------	--

Ancillary buildings.

1865	Opening of lecture hall and Sunday school.
1879	Rebuilding of hall and school (£2,200).

Tyne Dock United Methodist Free Church Chapel.Origins.

Sunday school established 1859. Church opened in Bede St. 1863 cost £250. Enlarged 1868.

Main buildings and renovations/rebuildings.

1886	Opening of chapel and school buildings in Hudson St. (£2,000).
1910	Addition of stone steps, class room, organ and choir chancel.

Victoria Rd. United Methodist Free Church Chapel.

Origins.

Church built 1868.

Main buildings and renovations/rebuildings.

- | | |
|------|--|
| 1868 | Opening of Victoria Rd. chapel. |
| 1905 | Opening of new chapel in Birchington Avenue (Westoe) .
Redbrick and stone late Gothic building with three vestries and octagonal tower and choir apse (£4,500).
450 sittings. |

Ancillary buildings.

- | | |
|------|---|
| 1905 | Schools with hall, meeting room and one main school room.
Accommodation for 400. |
|------|---|

Other United Methodist Free Church Chapels.

Reay St. Chapel was originally a mission (1888) but had become established as a separate congregation by 1895. There was also a chapel in **Forster St.** which existed in 1883 and which was part of the circuit returns for 1903.

Gospel Temperance Hall.Origins.

Formed 1882 as part of Blue Ribbon crusade in England.

Main buildings and renovations/rebuildings.

- 1883 Purchase of former Congregational chapel (Wallis St.). Total cost of purchase and alterations £1,500.
 1905 £300 spent on repairs to building.

Salvation Army.Origins.

Founded 1878 in Old Durham Hall, Cuthbert St. - formerly Baptist chapel. There were also Salvation Army corps at **Johnson's Hill** and at **Saville St.**

Main buildings and renovations/rebuildings.

- 1878 Purchase of Old Durham Hall, Cuthbert St.
 1911 Opening of new citadel in Havelock St. Stone and brick faced building with ground floor hall , young peoples' hall and classrooms, band room, officers' room and kitchen (£5,300).
 1100 sittings.

Unitarian Chapel.Origins.

Founded 1869.

Main buildings and renovations/rebuildings.

- 1874 Derby St. chapel with school room underneath.
 1880 Redecoration and cleaning of school and chapel.

South Shields Town and River Mission.

An interdenominational, evangelical organisation first formed in 1818 and reformed in 1852. Had Wapping St. Seamen's Bethel and Albion St. and Shadwell St. mission rooms as well as mission ship. Also had Tyne Dock branch. Disbanded in 1890 in light of growing number of denominational missions and lack of money.

Jewish congregations.

Synagogues were built at **Sunny Terrace** (1881-95) and later at **Charlotte Terrace**. In 1900 a ball was held to finance the building of a new synagogue.

Appendix D: Roman Catholic Statistical Returns.

(i) St. Bede's, South Shields.

Date	Estimated Catholic Population	% of Estimated Population attending Sunday Mass	% of Estimated Population attending Easter Mass	% of Catholic children attending Sunday school
1875	3500	-	34.28	-
1882	4300	34.9	31.1	
1885	4845	35.1	41.3	
1888	4000	37.5	40.0	
1891	4000	31.5	33.7	
1894	5700	-	-	
1897	5500	27.3	45.4	
1900	5000	28.0	26.4	
1903	6500	20.0	25.8	
1906	6500*	21.9	27.3	Boys 50 Girls 56 Infants 37.5
1909	5800*	29.7	30.9	Boys 76.5 Girls 51.7 Infants 51.4
1912	7000	29.28	36.7	

* = figures are the priests' estimates of Catholic population in the parish, rather than numbers recorded accurately in the parish 'book'.

Source: Status Animarum Returns 1875-1912.

Appendix D: Roman Catholic Statistical Returns.

(ii) SS. Peter and Paul, Tyne Dock.

Date	Estimated Catholic Population	% of Estimated Population attending Sunday Mass	% of Estimated Population attending Easter Mass
1885	548	68.6	33.9
1888	786	40.7	31.2
1891	1281*	21.8	33.0
1894	1160	27.6	41.2
1897	1352	24.4	36.2
1900	1500	30.7	42.3
1903	1100	35.4	47.5
1906	1300*	35.4	41.4
1909	1100*	45.4	44.3
1912	1500	50.0	52.9

* = figures are the priests' estimates of Catholic population in the parish, rather than numbers recorded accurately in the parish 'book'.

Source: Status Animarum Returns 1885-1912.

Appendix D: Roman Catholic Statistical Returns.

(iii) Our Lady, Queen of Martyrs, Newhouse.

Date	Estimated Catholic Population	% of Estimated Population attending Sunday Mass	% of Estimated Population attending Easter Mass	% of Catholic children attending Sunday school
1875	1600	24.2	60.6	-
1882	1368	-	46.0	
1885	1080	52.8	63.8	
1888	980	41.2	55.4	
1891	719	40.4	79.0	
1894	860	55.5	60.5	
1897	970	59.0	72.2	
1900	750	61.0	79.5	
1903	1000	48.0	57.0	Boys 90.4 Girls 58.9 Infants 54.3
1906	1015	51.1	58.1	
1909	1614	49.8	41.2	
1912	910*	54.4	75.8	

* figures reduced following formation of Ushaw Moor parish in 1910.

Source: Status Animarum Returns 1875-1912.

Appendix E: Teesdale Methodist Statistical Returns.

(i) Members in Middleton-in-Teesdale Primitive Methodist Circuit.

	1897	1899	1901	1903	1905	1907	1909	1911	1913
Eggleston	5	-	-	3	3	-	3	3	2
Forest	63	-	-	43	38	-	47	39	40
Harwood	62	-	-	39	45	-	51	40	33
Middleton	155	-	-	150	150	-	130	118	107

Source: Middleton in Teesdale Primitive Methodist Circuit Returns 1897-1914.

(ii) Members in Teesdale Wesleyan Circuit.

	1897	1899	1901	1903	1905	1907	1909	1911	1913
Membership	343	352	344	-	305	-	292	290	263

Source: Teesdale Wesleyan Circuit Quarterly Meeting Minutes 1878-1912
passim.

Appendix F: Pupil: Teacher ratios in Sunday schools.

(i) South Shields Primitive Methodist Circuit.

Date	Glebe	Tyne Dock	Heugh St.	Temple Town	Alma St.
1875	3.4	2.1	6.3	4.7	
1878	5	4.6	6.4	5.8	8.6
1881	5.6	10.4	7.5	5.1	8
1886	9.5	6.7	7.6	11	8.3
1889	9.5	9.4	7.6	11.3	9.6
1895	8.5	4.3	5.9	9.5	10.2
1898	9	5.1	7.5	9.6	14.7
1901	10.75	4.4	8.1	15.7	-
1904	9	5.2	10.4	14.4	-
1907	9	6.8	10.6	12.4	-
1910	8.7	5.9	13.2	11.2	-
1913	9.6	7.6	13.4	9.6	-

Source: South Shields Primitive Methodist Circuit Sunday School and Christian Endeavour Returns 1875-1914.

(ii) Waterhouses Primitive Methodist Circuit.

Date	Waterhouses	Hamsteels	Hedley Hill	Esh Colliery	Hedleyhope
1892	8.0	7.1	6.1	5.1	4.8
1895	10.3	6.9	4.4	6.9	4.7
1898	8.8	8.3	7.8	5.3	7.6
1901	8.7	8.2	6.4	4.2	5.4
1904	7.5	7.6		5.9	6.8
1907	8.2	7.8	14.0		
1910	8.9	9.1			
1912	10.7	7.2	23.0		

Source: Waterhouses Primitive Methodist Circuit Returns 1892-1912.

Appendix F: Pupil: Teacher ratios in Sunday schools.

(iii) Teesdale Wesleyan Circuit.

Date	Middleton	Newbiggen	Eggleston	Forest
1887	4.9	4.7	4.2	7.0
1890	4.6	6.1	4.4	10.0
1893	4.0	5.3	4.0	9.3
1899	4.0	11.0	3.4	4.8
1902	5.0	10.2	3.4	6.0
1905	9.4	6.5	2.85	11.0

Source: Teesdale Wesleyan Circuit Sunday School Schedules 1887-1905.

**Appendix G: Gender Balance Amongst Sunday School Teachers - Male:
Female ratio.**

(i) South Shields Primitive Methodist Circuit.

Date	Glebe	Tyne Dock	Heugh St.	Temple Town	Alma St.
1875	1.6	1.35	3.75	1.4	
1878	1.9	1.6	1.75	2.25	1.8
1881	1.4	0.9	1.5	1.8	1.2
1886	1.7	1.7	1	2.2	2.4
1889	1.6	1.3	1.1	1.6	2
1895	2.6	1.2	3.5	1.6	2.2
1898	2	1.6	1.4	1.9	1.3
1901	1.6	1.2		1.4	0.8
1904	1.5	1.5		1	1.3
1907	2	1.4		1.4	1.3
1910	1.3	0.95		1.4	1.3
1913	1	1.2		1.05	1.1

Source: South Shields Primitive Methodist Circuit Sunday School and Christian Endeavour Returns 1875-1914.

(ii) Waterhouses Primitive Methodist Circuit.

	Waterhouses	Hamsteels	Hedley Hill	Esh Colliery	Hedley Hope
1892	2.6	3	0.6	9.5	no women
1895	5	2.4	7	8	9
1898	5.6	2.8	2.3	no women	no women
1901	18	20	2.3	15.5	3
1904	17	18	-	3.4	6
1907	8.5	3.8	no women	-	-
1910	16	5	-	-	-
1912	7	6.5	no women	-	-

Source: Waterhouses Primitive Methodist Circuit Returns 1892-1912.

**Appendix II: Age of Sunday Scholars.
Percentage of Total Scholars Aged Under 7.**

(i) South Shields Primitive Methodist Circuit.

Date	Glebe	Tyne Dock	Temple Town	Alma St.
1904	14.7	35	16.7	44.2
1907	18.4	28.4	33.2	32.1
1910	24	36.5	26.6	30.6
1913	27.6	29.7	31.3	31.3

Source: South Shields Primitive Methodist Circuit Sunday School and Christian Endeavour Returns 1875-1914.

(ii) Waterhouses Primitive Methodist Circuit.

Date	Waterhouses	Hamsteels	Hedley Hill	Esh Colliery	Hedleyhope
1904	22.9	41.6	-	22.4	34.7
1907	28.2	32.4	47.6	-	-
1910	23.6	39.6	-	-	-
1912	17.5	50	43.4	-	-

Source: Waterhouses Primitive Methodist Circuit Returns 1892-1912.

(iii) Teesdale Wesleyan Methodist Circuit.

Date	Middleton	Newbiggen	Eggleston	Forest
1887	12.3	4	26	22.8
1890	18	11.6	29	25
1893	22	33	18.7	46
1899	12.9	27	17.4	25
1902	20	27	22	20.8
1905	22.9	12.8	12	21.2

Source: Teesdale Wesleyan Circuit Sunday School Schedules 1887-1905.

**Appendix H: Age of Sunday Scholars.
Percentage of Total Scholars Aged 14 and Over.**

(i) South Shields Primitive Methodist Circuit.

Date	Glebe	Tyne Dock	Temple Town	Alma St.
1904	33.8	18.1	34.4	21.1
1907	28.2	13.6	32.1	34.9
1910	29.2	21.7	26.0	19.1
1913	11.8	23.4	20.9	24.8

Source: South Shields Primitive Methodist Circuit Sunday School and Christian Endeavour Returns 1875-1914.

(ii) Waterhouses Primitive Methodist Circuit.

Date	Waterhouses	Hamsteels	Hedley Hill	Esh Colliery	Hedleyhope
1892	26.9	10.0	29.8	20.3	9.3
1895	26.4	15.6	42.8	19.2	28.5
1898	26.7	15.6	9.8	15.6	15.7
1901	31.9	20.3	7.2	28.5	27.9
1904	24.2	19.4	-	26.3	6.0
1907	23.0	27.6	-	-	-
1910	26.3	19.5	-	-	-
1912	35.1	7.4	-	-	-

Source: Waterhouses Primitive Methodist Circuit Returns 1892-1912.

(iii) Teesdale Wesleyan Methodist Circuit.

Date	Middleton	Newbiggen	Eggleson	Forest
1887	10.4	17	13.6	11.4
1890	10.8	18.6	8.1	10.0
1893	16.0	19.0	13.3	14.2
1899	15.0	6.8	-	8.3
1902	9.5	10.4	7.4	-
1905	13.9	12.8	10.5	6.0

Source: Teesdale Wesleyan Circuit Sunday School Schedules 1887-1905.

**Appendix I: Gender of Sunday Scholars -
Ratio Female: Male.**

(i) South Shields Primitive Methodist Circuit.

Date	Glebe	Tyne Dock	Heugh St.	Temple Town	Alma St.
1875	1	0.75	1.2	0.8	-
1878	1	1.2	1.1	1	0.8
1881	0.7	1.2	1.1	1.2	0.9
1886	0.9	1.1	1	1.1	1.1
1889	0.7	1.1	1.2	1.3	1
1895	1.1	1.2	0.8	1.5	1.1
1898	1.2	1.1	1.25	1.5	0.7
1901	0.9	1.2	-	1.2	0.9
1904	0.9	1.2	-	1.3	1.1
1907	1	0.8	-	1	1.1
1910	0.9	1.1	-	1	1
1913	0.8	1.2	-	1.1	1

Source: South Shields Primitive Methodist Circuit Sunday School and Christian Endeavour Returns 1875-1914.

(ii) Waterhouses Primitive Methodist Circuit.

Date	Waterhouses	Hamsteels	Hedley Hill	Esh Colliery	Hedley Hope
1892	1.1	1.1	1.1	1	1
1895	1.1	0.8	0.9	0.6	1
1898	0.9	0.7	0.9	1	1.2
1901	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.9	1.2
1904	0.9	1	-	1.2	0.8
1907	0.9	1	1.6		
1910	0.9	0.7	-	-	-
1912	0.7	0.6	0.6	-	-

Source: Waterhouses Primitive Methodist Circuit Returns 1892-1912.

Appendix J: Total Numbers of Sunday Scholars.

(i) South Shields Primitive Methodist Circuit.

Date	Glebe	Tyne Dock	Heugh St.	Temple Town	Alma St.
1875	200	70	120	178	120
1878	220	120	140	224	-
1881	240	239	150	200	160
1886	360	202	61	383	200
1889	400	216	130	464	230
1895	424	168	53	494	235
1898	429	159	90	500	235
1901	484	167	-	430	220
1904	473	171	-	479	260
1907	488	176	-	463	286
1910	540	230	-	500	235
1913	650	235	-	521	201

Source: South Shields Primitive Methodist Circuit Sunday School and Christian Endeavour Returns 1875-1914.

(ii) Waterhouses Primitive Methodist Circuit.

Date	Waterhouses	Hamsteels	Hedley Hill	Esh Colliery	Hedley Hope
1892	176	200	67	108	43
1895	185	167	70	125	47
1898	177	192	98	128	38
1901	166	172	83	140	43
1904	135	144	-	129	46
1907	156	188	42	-	-
1910	152	164	-	-	-
1912	171	108	46	-	-

Source: Waterhouses Primitive Methodist Circuit Returns 1892-1912.

Appendix J: Total Numbers of Sunday Scholars.

(iii) Teesdale Wesleyan Methodist Circuit.

Date	Middleton	Newbiggen	Eggleston	Forest
1887	162	47	123	35
1890	148	43	123	40
1893	112	42	112	28
1899	124	44	86	24
1902	115	48	81	24
1905	122	39	57	33

Source: Teesdale Wesleyan Circuit Sunday School Schedules 1887-1905.

Appendix K: Attendance of Sunday Scholars as percentage of number on roll.

(i) South Shields Primitive Methodist Circuit.

Date	Glebe	Tyne Dock	Heugh St.	Temple Town	Alma St.
1875	78.2	75.7	66.6	97.1	
1878	65.9	82.5	62.1	75.8	56.6
1881	67.9	63.5	72.0	95.0	67.5
1886	68.3	68.3	65.5	75.7	76.5
1889	87.5	66.6	53.8	77.5	83.9
1895	73.5	66.6	75.4	87.0	76.5
1898	73.4	71.0	83.3	84.6	63.8
1901	74.5	62.2	75.6	85.1	61.3
1904	75.6	63.1		76.8	73.0
1907	77.4	71.5		77.9	66.4
1910	83.7	67.3		74.8	71.9
1913	77.0	65.5		68.3	69.6

Source: South Shields Primitive Methodist Circuit Sunday School and Christian Endeavour Returns 1875-1914.

(ii) Waterhouses Primitive Methodist Circuit.

Date	Waterhouses	Hamsteels	Hedley Hill	Esh Colliery	Hedley Hope
1892	78.4	60.0	59.0	59.2	62.7
1895	77.8	66.4	65.7	68	65.9
1898	76.1	53.6	65.6	67.9	68.4
1901	72.2	68	84.3	60.7	74.4
1904	72.0	63.8	-	74.4	78.2
1907	75.0	72.8	85.7	-	-
1910	69.7	65.8	-	-	-
1912	68.4	64.8	69.5	-	-

Source: Waterhouses Primitive Methodist Circuit Returns 1892-1912.

Appendix K: Attendance of Sunday Scholars as percentage of number on roll.

(iii) Teesdale Wesleyan Methodist Circuit.

Date	Middleton	Newbiggen	Eggleston	Forest
1887	79.6	74.4	73	45.7
1890	68.9	69.7	65	50
1893	87.5	64.2	67.8	78.5
1899	76.6	88.6	69.7	83.3
1902	67.8	68.7	61.7	75
1905	66.3	92	56.1	39.3

Source: Teesdale Wesleyan Circuit Sunday School Schedules 1887-1905.

Appendix L: New members in the Ocean Rd. Congregational Guild 1902-13.

	Full Members	Associate Members	
Junior Members	48 (37%)	32 (24%)	80 (61%)
Senior Members	27 (21%)	24 (18%)	51 (39%)
	75 (56.5%)	56 (43.5%)	

Size of sample 131

Source: South Shields Ocean Rd. Congregational Church Guild Minute Book 1900-1913.

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Appendix B (i)
South Shields in 1870.





Appendix B (iii)
The Deerness Valley in 1915



Appendix B (iv)
Upper Teesdale in 1937.

